

AN ASPECT OF EUROPEAN DIPLOMACY
IN THE MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY :

THE DIPLOMATIC CAREER OF
THE FOURTH EARL OF ROCHFORD
AT TURIN, MADRID, AND PARIS,
1749-1768.

A Thesis presented for the Degree of
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ABSTRACT

This thesis represents the first detailed investigation into the career of a neglected British statesman of the 18th century. Much new material, including hitherto undiscovered letters, has been used to complement official sources. The aim of the thesis has been to reconstruct, as fully as the surviving evidence permits, the full range of Rochford's work as a diplomat, with a view to assessing his capacity and suitability to direct British foreign policy as Secretary of State after 1768. It is held that a study embracing routine work and lesser negotiations presents a fairer picture than one which examines only crises or major negotiations where vital circumstances often lie outside the individual's control. As a career biography, this study is not intended to be 'diplomatic history' in the usually accepted sense, but only a narrowly prescribed aspect thereof.

Rochford is revealed to have been an exceptionally diligent and well-motivated diplomat, his main strengths being ; careful attention to detail ; thorough preparation even for minor cases ; an ability to "win friends and influence people" ; a realistic judgment of how far he could press a foreign Court without harm to his own position ; a talent for finding and retaining able subordinates and useful intelligence contacts ; and a firm grasp of the mainsprings of international relations.

His chief weakness as a negotiator, a tendency to loquacity and verbal indiscretion, is shown to be at times an effective smokescreen device for a diplomat, but is conceded to be a serious fault in a Secretary of State.

A major theme to emerge from Rochford's routine work is his vigilance in protection of British trading interests, as revealed by his close dealings with British Consuls from Turin and Madrid. New light is here cast upon relations between the consular and diplomatic services in the 18th century.

Rochford is to be credited with the successful resolution of almost all the minor negotiations entrusted to him, by which he gained a reputation for tact and firmness. Even in those incapable of success, he is shown to have gained more than most would be content with. His enthusiasm and initiative frequently led him to anticipate instructions, but usually with accuracy and subsequent commendation.

In ten years' service, he was only twice rebuked, the first at Turin being wholly undeserved. The second, during the Falkland Crisis of 1766, stemmed from unclear instructions, for which Shelburne apologised, and a major misunderstanding, in which Rochford's assumption, being based on his Madrid experience, was probably the more realistic. The account of this negotiation makes use for the first time of an important secret correspondence missing from the State Papers. Rochford's failure in the crisis over Corsica in 1768 is shown to be the responsibility of a weak and divided Ministry which failed to support his own spirited tone.

In the final assessment, it is concluded that while he was not brilliant, and probably lacked the essential qualities for greatness, Rochford may now be regarded as an exceptionally able diplomat, diligent and painstaking yet not without breadth of vision, which made him, if not the ideal candidate to be Secretary of State, then at least (in Newcastle's words) "the fittest for it of any man in England" of his time.

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PREFACE

Despite the general title with which it was first registered, this thesis is not strictly a piece of diplomatic history. As such, it would be a bad example of that unfashionable though necessary branch of inquiry, since its sources are almost entirely British and its frame of reference arbitrarily narrow. It is, as the second and more specific title suggests, an essay in quite another unfashionable historical mode, namely, that of career biography. Yet even if one leaves aside for a moment the many weighty objections to the biographical approach, there still remains the curious fact that this present contribution is really a biography manqué, since it covers only the first part of its subject's life and stops short of that which may be thought, in terms of public office, the more important part. How this came about deserves some preliminary explanation.

The pages which follow together constitute the tangible product of a Mixed-Tenure Postgraduate Scholarship awarded by the New Zealand University Grants Committee in 1970. The terms of this award provide for a year's preliminary work within New Zealand, a period of no more than twelve months overseas, and a final year in New Zealand preparing a thesis for the Ph.D. degree. This new form of postgraduate award is intended to foster the growth of Ph.D. schools within New Zealand, and in the case of History, to encourage research in fields other than local history which are currently taught in New Zealand universities.

I was advised at an early stage to seek if possible a topic in Early Modern European History, since this field not only figured prominently in almost every History degree course in this country, but also seemed perennially difficult to staff. There was, of course, the problem of reconciling a year's initial research with the very limited resources available within New Zealand for such a field. Nevertheless, I proceeded in the

knowledge that the University of Canterbury possesses a very full collection of printed and microfilmed source material for British history in the early part of the reign of George III, amassed by a former Head of the History Department, Professor N.C. Phillips. Initially, I thought in terms of a Namierite topic in political history, but again I was strongly advised to seek a European rather than a purely British topic, or at least a British topic with a European twist. This advice led me obviously enough to diplomatic history, as an area in which the primary sources were not only well defined but more easily available in microfilm form ; this seemed an important consideration in view of my limited time overseas and my remoteness from the archives whilst writing the thesis.

Whilst reading in search of a suitable topic, I was struck by the dearth of scholarly studies on British foreign policy in the period 1763 to 1775, between the Seven Years' War and the War of American Independence. And of all the diplomats and statesmen then charged with the conduct of British foreign policy, none seemed quite so central yet so enigmatic and obscure as the fourth Earl of Rochford.

Even at a superficial glance, Rochford's career seemed to embrace at once a unity and a breadth of experience exceptional in the British diplomatic service at this time. As Britain's Ambassador at Madrid after the Peace of Paris (1763), he had charge of several important negotiations arising from the peace treaty, and after his transfer to Paris, he performed vital roles in the first Falkland Islands Crisis of 1766 and the crisis over the French acquisition of Corsica in 1768. As Secretary of State after 1768, he first served two years in the unfamiliar Northern Department, before being transferred to the more congenial Southern Department at the height of the second and more critical Falklands Crisis of 1770. His term of office in the Southern Department until 1775 was the longest of any incumbent since Newcastle's 1724-1746 tenure. In theory at least, Rochford was exceptionally well-qualified to direct British foreign policy towards the rest of Europe. But was he so in practice ? Where may one turn for a scholarly study of his career, or indeed any part of it ?

Apart from the able and fairly accurate article by Thomas Seccombe in the Dictionary of National Biography (XXI, 1344-1346 ; under Zuytlestein), and the usual bare notices in the peerages and biographical dictionaries, there is to my knowledge only one published item specifically concerned with the career of the fourth Earl of Rochford. This is a short article by an amateur genealogist (K. Walker, "William Henry, Earl of Rochford ; an Essex Diplomat," Essex Review, XLVI (1937), 65-72), which adds only a few local and personal details to the DNB article, yet describes Rochford as "a diplomat who was not diplomatic, and a politician far from politic," without advancing any serious evidence for either opinion.

Modern historians appear in general to have looked no farther than the most readily available contemporary estimate of Rochford, in Horace Walpole's Memoirs of the Reign of George III (in G.F. Barker's 1895 edition, III, 168) ; "a man of no abilities and of as little knowledge, except in the routine of office." From this and Walpole's other scathing remarks, it may have been thought there was no point in examining the career of an acknowledged mediocrity. Walpole cannot, however, be regarded as an impartial observer, especially not in this case : he had taken an intense dislike to Rochford on account of his part in the 1772 Royal Marriages Act which directly affected Walpole's niece.

Even had the task of investigating Rochford's career seemed worthwhile, there still remained a difficulty over his papers. Archdeacon Coxe consulted Rochford's private papers at St Osyth when preparing his Memoirs of the Kings of Spain of the House of Bourbon (see the Introduction to the 2nd edition, 1815), but he cited only the official correspondence now available at the Public Record Office, London. Even the copies he had made from Rochford's private papers included only a handful of letters not found in the Record Office (see British Museum, Additional Manuscripts 9242, Coxe Papers). Since then, Rochford's private papers seemed to have disappeared without trace, and as recently as 1961 it was declared that they had not been found (see The Fourth Earl of Sandwich, Diplomatic Correspondence 1763-1765, edited by F. Spencer (Manchester, 1961), p.124). However, it may be seen from the Note which follows this Preface that many letters have survived, though widely scattered, and have been used for this thesis.

As a result of the apparent absence of papers, and also possibly thanks to Horace Walpole's slighting estimation, Rochford has been sadly neglected by most writers on the eighteenth century, barely rating a mention in the standard histories of the period. In large part, of course, this reflects the general neglect of British foreign policy in the period 1763 to 1775. Fortunately, in recent years this neglect has begun to be remedied, bringing more frequent reference to Rochford both as a diplomat and as Secretary of State. (See in particular the work of Professor Michael Roberts, his article "Great Britain and the Swedish Revolution, 1772-3," in Historical Journal, VII (1964), 1-46, and his 1969 Stenton Lecture, Splendid Isolation, 1763-1780 (Reading, 1970) ; in addition to Spencer's work on Sandwich, mentioned above, see also Dr M.S. Anderson's various articles on Anglo-Russian relations.) The glimpses thus revealed suggest a somewhat different picture of Rochford than that given by Horace Walpole, and a detailed study of Rochford's career is now not only long overdue but increasingly necessary to our understanding of British foreign policy after 1763.

My original plan for this thesis, upon which I commenced preliminary work in 1970 and began gathering material in the United Kingdom in 1971, was therefore to review Rochford's two major embassies at Madrid and Paris, and to examine in detail his Southern Secretaryship, with an emphasis on Britain's relations with France and Spain. Two circumstances intervened, however, to alter this plan. The first was a dawning realization that twelve months were simply not enough for the research necessary to do justice to all the ramifications of Rochford's Secretaryship. The second was my timely and exciting discovery of a useful cache of Rochford's papers in the possession of one branch of his descendants. These papers, however, were largely related to Rochford's very first post at Turin (1749-1755), which had figured nowhere in my original plan.

I was rescued from my dilemma by Professor R.M. Hatton, who advised me to make full use of this find, by devoting the thesis to Rochford's diplomatic career, reserving his Secretaryship for further research at a later date. Hence the present scope of the thesis, and the haste with which it has been written. Though it is only half the full story, even this half strains the bounds of a thesis.

My aim has therefore been essentially quite simple : to assess, on the basis of a detailed examination of his diplomatic career, Rochford's abilities as a diplomat and his suitability to take charge of British foreign policy as Secretary of State.

The questions which I seek to answer are rather elementary and closely related to reconstructing Rochford's life and work : apart from the obvious facts about his family background, early life, marriage, and political connexions, why did he enter the diplomatic service ? was he diligent or lazy ? did he always have to be prodded by instructions, or did he use his initiative ? if so, how wisely ? did he ever commit any serious blunders ? was he ever rebuked, praised, or commended ? how well did he come to understand the Courts to which he was appointed ? how accurate was his assessment of personalities ? what was his standing at foreign Courts ? with other foreign ministers ? was he liked and respected, or distrusted and scorned ? how efficient was his collection of information ? did he attract and retain reliable sources of secret intelligence ? how useful were his reports ? were his dispatches clear and judicious, or muddled and alarmist ? was he attentive to routine matters as well as the big negotiations ? how well did he prepare himself by studying the background of particular cases ? in specific negotiations, how well did he press Britain's case ? what sort of a negotiator was he ? supple and shrewd, or obtuse and easily hoodwinked ? what were his main weaknesses ? his worst failures ? did he possess any skill as a diplomat ? did he obtain any insight into European affairs ? In short, if this thesis has any single aim, it is to test Horace Walpole's estimation : was Rochford in fact "a man of no abilities" ?

Though the bulk of the evidence which I present in answer to these and similar questions is fresh in the sense that it has not been used before, it also has the disadvantage of depicting Rochford largely as he wished himself to be seen. My most difficult task has been to find either corroborative or contrasting testimony from other sources, and to maintain a sufficiently critical view of my subject. My success or failure in this respect may well prove the crucial test for the value of this thesis as a career biography,

and as a contribution to the study of the British diplomatic service in the eighteenth century. As mentioned at the start of this Preface, I make no claim for this thesis as a piece of diplomatic history, especially in the chapters which treat of major negotiations in which Rochford was involved. Here my narrowly biographical approach may seem to resemble something akin to tightrope-walking rather than good diplomatic history. Even so, while not actually intended, it is possible that my use of fresh material may shed a few glimmers of new light on certain minor aspects of European diplomacy in this period.

NOTE ON MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

The chief manuscript source for this thesis has been Rochford's official diplomatic correspondence contained in the relevant volumes of State Papers, Foreign, at the Public Record Office, London. Details of these volumes are given in the first part of my Bibliography. This Note is merely to indicate the extent to which I have been able to trace Rochford's surviving private correspondence.

The obvious place to look for Rochford's own letters is in the collections of those to whom he wrote, where these have survived. This has indeed been a fruitful line of inquiry, but most of the material thus traced is concerned with Rochford's Secretaryship, as in the Dartmouth and Grantham Papers, along with many others ; these figure nowhere in this thesis. Of those which contain material relating to his diplomatic career, the Newcastle and Hardwicke Papers in the British Museum are perhaps the richest, but the most valuable has probably been the Shelburne Papers, now at the William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan. Here is found the vital secret correspondence regarding the first Falkland Islands Crisis of 1766, which is missing from the State Papers.

The search for Rochford's own private papers, which would comprise his drafts and received correspondence, has been more frustrating but also not without reward. The Essex Record Office, my first place of inquiry, has a number of deeds, wills, and estate records received from solicitors, but no private papers or Rochford correspondence from the eighteenth century. Nor are there any Rochford papers remaining at St Osyth, the former family seat. The estate was sold not long after the death of Rochford's grandson in 1857, and though the contents of the house appear to have been kept intact until the end of the century, there was a complete clearance sale of furniture, paintings, and household effects in 1920 which may have included old papers amongst the contents of the library.

However, thanks to the Notes on Migrations of MSS in the Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, VIII (1930-31), 191-2, I was able to obtain details of a sale of Rochford's diplomatic papers at Sotheby's in London on 16 December 1930. This collection, comprising some 750 items from Rochford's three postings (though nothing earlier or later, and no family papers as such), was unfortunately split up and dispersed to several dealers, none of whom has any record of subsequent disposals. It is possible that this was not the only sale of Rochford papers at this time, though I have been unable to trace any others.

The dealers with whom I corresponded over this sale suggested that a broken collection at that particular time probably crossed sooner or later to the U.S.A., there to be further scattered as individual autograph specimens. In the course of my inquiries to some twenty-nine likely repositories across the U.S.A., I have succeeded in tracing only about 80 Rochford letters, some of which do not appear to have been part of the 1930 sale at Sotheby's. The largest single group has been collected by Dr Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis, director of the Yale edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence, and is now preserved in his Walpole Library at Farmington.

The last line of approach, that of attempting to trace Rochford's descendants, has been the most interesting and rewarding of all. The Nassau family of Palmers Green, and Mr T.L. Braddell of Winchmore Hill, have a few family mementos but no papers at all. However, thanks to the kindness of Mr Kenneth Walker, I was introduced to Mr and Mrs W.F. Nassau of Hampstead, London, who readily gave me access to the only papers still in their possession. These consist of some 370 items, mostly foul drafts and minor correspondence from Rochford's Turin ministry, though with a few Madrid and Paris items. This boxful may represent the leavings after the selection made for the 1930 Sotheby's sale. These papers, which I was permitted to notify to the National Register of Archives, and to calendar according to their advice, I have cited as the Nassau Papers.

NOTE ON DATES, ABBREVIATIONS, AND FOREIGN NAMES

1. The calendar used in Britain before 1752 was the Julian or Old Style, which was eleven days behind that used in almost all other European countries, namely the Gregorian or New Style. In consequence of Chesterfield's Act of 1751 (24 George II, cap.23), Britain changed to the New Style in 1752 by omitting eleven days between 2 and 14 September, thus preserving the succession of days of the week.

In this thesis, the few documents which are identified only by the Old Style are cited with the abbreviation O.S. All other dates before and after 1752 are given in New Style.

2. Rather than begin with a pretentious list of little-used abbreviations, I have adopted the principle of giving each reference in full in the first instance. Thereafter I will give, for manuscript sources the most widely accepted abbreviation (for example, SP for State Papers, Foreign, Public Record Office), and for secondary sources an identifiable shortened title, avoiding wherever possible the ugly and confusing abbreviation *cp.cit.*

3. My spelling of foreign names has been consciously inconsistent. Some less well-known names have been retained in their original, but most have been rendered either in the most convenient anglicized form, or that which Rochford adopted in his dispatches. For example, I give Leghorn for Livorno, but Squilaci for Esquilache.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I stand in debt to the assistance of many people in writing this thesis, and I gladly take this opportunity of recording my thanks.

I was fortunate to encounter remarkably patient and helpful staff at the Public Record Office, the British Museum, and the Institute of Historical Research, together with many other libraries, museums, and Record Offices, but in particular I would mention the staff of the Arts Library at the Queen's University, Belfast, and Miss Nancy Briggs of the Essex Record Office, for their interest and assistance.

For information on the Nassau-Zuylestein family, I am grateful to Mr Kenneth Walker of Romford, Essex, and to Jonkheer F.G.L.O. van Kretschmar, now of the Institut Néerlandais at Paris. Mr J.F. Kerslake and Miss Wimbush at the National Portrait Gallery helped me to trace surviving Rochford family portraits.

For photocopies of the Rochford letters in his possession, I am deeply grateful to Dr W.S. Lewis of Yale, as also for his encouraging correspondence and several useful references from other manuscripts in his collection. Mr W. Joyce, Manuscripts Librarian of the Clements Library, University of Michigan, was most obliging over my request for microfilm of the Rochford items in his care.

I am especially grateful to Mr and Mrs W.F. Nassau of Hampstead, London, for their trust and kindness in allowing me access to the papers in their possession. My wife and I will long cherish many happy memories of their warm hospitality and friendship.

Mr Tom Braddell of Winchmore Hill, London, kindly let me read his father's unpublished fragment of family history, "Spes Durat Amorum," which added several useful references to my own preliminary work from the secondary sources.

Whatever the faults of this thesis, these cannot be attributed to any lack of supervisors, since I have been fortunate

in receiving the attention of no fewer than three altogether, each at different stages of my work.

Professor Michael Roberts gave me much sage advice and the use of his collection of microfilmed material from various European archives for my initial work on Rochford's Secretaryship. Though under considerable pressure himself, he also contrived to make my wife and I feel welcome and at home in a strife-torn city on our arrival in Northern Ireland.

In London I was fortunate to attend Professor R.M. Hatton's seminars at the Institute of Historical Research, and there to meet Dr M.S. Anderson, whose correspondence early in 1970 had encouraged me to persist with my choice of Rochford as a subject for research. As noted in the Preface, the present shape of this thesis owes much to Professor Hatton's timely advice and warm-hearted support at a difficult phase. I am also grateful to her for introducing me to two other workers in this field, Mr Hamish Scott and Dr J.A. Lalaguna, with whom I exchanged views and information to our mutual advantages.

To my supervisor here at Canterbury, Professor G.W.O. Woodward, I am indebted in so many ways it would become tedious to recite them all here. But for his unfailing assistance and kindly guidance, this thesis might never have seen the light of day. Needless to add, however, I am solely responsible for all errors and weaknesses.

Finally, my greatest indebtedness, for which words are singularly inadequate, has been acknowledged on an earlier page.

CHAPTER 1 ; Family Background and Early Life

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- 1-3 Frederick van Nassau, Lord of Zuylestein ; his English marriage 1648 ; Governor to William III of Orange ; visit to England 1670 ; killed 1672.
- 4-7 his son William Henry ; flirtation, scandal, and marriage 1680-81 ; Zuylestein's role in the "Glorious Revolution," 1688-89 ; campaigns in Ireland and Flanders ; created 1st Earl of Rochford 1695.
- 8-9 Viscount Tunbridge ; soldier under Ormonde ; ADC to Marlborough at Blenheim ; becomes 2nd Earl of Rochford 1708 ; killed in Spain 1710.
- 9-11 Frederick succeeds as 3rd Earl ; his marriage to an heiress, Bessy Savage ; the St Osyth estate ; his brother Henry at Easton, Suffolk ; Frederick's death 1738.
- 12-13 William Henry Nassau de Zuylestein ; childhood obscure ; brother Richard Savage Nassau ; school-friends at Eton ; travels to Switzerland.
- 13-14 becomes 4th Earl of Rochford 1738 ; Gentleman of the Bedchamber ; inherits Easton ; his marriage to Lucy Younge 1742.
- 15-17 their correspondence with David Garrick the actor ; Rochford's philosophy ; his interest in the theatre ; Beaumarchais.
- 18-19 Rochford at St Osyth ; Essex friends ; country diversions ; town house at Berkeley Square ; Richard marries a neighbour, the Dowager Duchess of Hamilton.
- 20-21 Lucy and the Duke of Cumberland ; Cumberland as patron ; Rochford's ambitions for high office ; decides on a diplomatic career.
- 22-23 appointment to Turin 1749 ; admitted to White's Club ; Walpole comments to Mann.
- 24-26 departure from England ; sojourn in Paris ; an invitation to Geneva declined ; journeys direct to Turin.

Family Background and Early Life

I. William Henry Nassau de Zuylestein (1717-1781) was the fourth and penultimate Earl of Rochford : the title became extinct in 1830 at the death of his bachelor nephew.¹ The Rochford Earldom (1695) was a creation of William III, in favour of a Dutch family closely related to him which had chosen to settle in England after the "Glorious Revolution" of 1689. While the fourth Earl of Rochford was apparently the first Nassau-Zuylestein to be born and educated as an Englishman, the marriages of two of his forebears had already made the family half-English even before its naturalization in 1689.

The Nassau-Zuylestein family was founded by Frederick van Nassau (1624-1672). He was an illegitimate son of the Prince of Orange, Frederick Henry (1584-1647), and therefore half-brother to Prince William II of Orange (1626-1650), as well as grandson of William I, called William the Silent.² Frederick van Nassau was greatly favoured by his father, who in May 1640 conferred on him the manors of Zuylestein and Leersum in the County of Utrecht.³

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1. G.E. Cockayne, The Complete Peerage, XI, edited by G.H. White (London, 1959), pp.53-55. The family of Queen Anne Boleyn had been only Barons and Viscounts Rochford in the sixteenth century ; see The Complete Peerage, XI, pp.51-52. The Earls of Rochford ought not to be confused with the Rochfort family of Co. Westmeath, Ireland, who became (1756) Earls of Belvedere ; The Complete Peerage, II, 114.
 2. See the Genealogical Chart, Appendix A. The Complete Peerage, XI, p.52, note (a), follows the Dictionary of National Biography (hereafter cited as D.N.B.), XXI, p.1341, in giving 1608 as the date of birth of Frederick van Nassau, but this has been established as 27 March 1624 ; see W.M.C. Regt, "Nassau-Zuylestein", in Genealogische en Heraldische Bladen (1907), pp.486-501.
 3. Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek, I, pp.1358-1359. See also A.J. van der Aa, Aardrijkskundig Woordenboek der Nederlanden (1851), pp.528-529. Zuylestein lay between Leersum and Amerongen, some 25 kilometres south-east of Utrecht.(not "about a mile" as in D.N.B.) The Huis Zuylestein was destroyed during the Second World War.

As Lord of Zuylestein and Leersum, Frederick van Nassau was admitted to the Provincial House of the Knights of Utrecht, and in August 1640 became a Captain in the Infantry of the States-General. He was later promoted Lieutenant-Colonel of the Utrecht Regiment, and from 1646 he was Military Commander of Utrecht.⁴

Now known simply as Zuylestein, Frederick was married at the Hague in October 1648. His bride was an Englishwoman, Mary Killigrew, who had come to Holland as a Maid of Honour to the Princess Mary when she married William II of Orange. It was a popular match, between a handsome favourite and a leading court beauty. Within a year, Mary bore Zuylestein a son, who was named William Henry ; he it was who later became the first Earl of Rochford.⁵

The young Zuylestein family remained close favourites of the Prince and Princess of Orange, and a strong bond existed between William II and his dashing half-brother, terminated only by that Prince's untimely death in 1650, barely a few days before the birth of his successor, William III (1650-1702). When the time came to appoint a Governor for the infant Prince of Orange, Zuylestein was the only nominee Princess Mary would countenance. She rightly believed that Zuylestein's strong-willed English wife would redeem his easy-going nature, and their son William Henry was already the Prince's constant playmate when Zuylestein was appointed Governor in 1659.⁶

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4. These details I owe to Jonkheer F.G.L.O. van Kretschmar, Director of the Stichting Iconografisch Bureau at the Hague.
 5. He was baptised on 7 October 1649 ; The Complete Peerage, XI, p.52. The D.N.B. gives the marriage as 1644, and the birth as May 1645.
 6. Zuylestein's Instructions as Governor are summarized at length in Marjorie Bowen, William, Prince of Orange, 1650-1673 (London, 1928), but for a more recent account of Zuylestein's early career, see Nesca A. Robb, William of Orange ; Part I, The Early Years, 1650-1673 (London, 1962), pp. 44, 94, 95-97, 113, 149. Stephen B. Baxter, William III (London, 1966), pp.22-24, thinks Zuylestein's poverty and laziness made him "a most unsuitable choice" as Governor ; yet concedes (pp.36-37) that he had a civilizing influence on the boy.

Prince William became deeply attached to his cheerful and indulgent "uncle" as Governor, and bitterly resented his replacement in 1666 by a de Witt partisan.⁷ Nevertheless, Zuylestein accompanied the Prince on a visit to England in the winter of 1670, and was the only person to whom William confided the startling disclosures made to him by Charles II regarding his religious views. Zuylestein was also one of the select few who received honorary degrees with William at Oxford during this visit.⁸

William III became Stadholder in July 1672, in the depths of the crisis caused by the French invasion of that year. His assumption of power was yet further overshadowed by the murder of the de Witt brothers on 20 August at the hands of the Hague mob. Zuylestein has traditionally been vilified for his share in this sordid affray : he was certainly instrumental in the earlier arrest of Cornelis de Witt, but the evidence for his presence in the crowd that fatal afternoon remains inconclusive.⁹

Whatever Zuylestein's actual complicity, he retained William's favour, which had already been manifest in his steady military advancement.¹⁰ He naturally took a leading role in the campaign to repulse the French invasion, but it was in this service that he met an end no less brutal than that of the de Witt brothers. After helping to recapture the town of Woerden in October 1672, Zuylestein was caught in a sudden French counter-attack on the

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7. Robb, William of Orange, I, pp.113, 149. See also P. Geyl, Orange and Stuart, 1644-1672, (London, 1969 ; translated from the 1939 Dutch edition.), pp. 131, 147-148, 198, 242-243.
 8. Burnet's History of His Own Time (London, 1838), II, p.185. Robb, William of Orange, I, pp.178, 187. Zuylestein was in London on 15 December 1670 when he supped with the diarist Evelyn ; Diary, edited by E.S. de Beer (Oxford, 1955), III, p.565.
 9. Baxter, William III, pp.80-84.
 10. promoted Colonel, 1658 ; Lieutenant-General, January 1668 ; Governor of Breda, April 1670 ; General of Infantry, 1672. These details I owe to Kretschmar (see note 4). I have not yet seen E.B.F. Witterst van Hoogalnd, De aftstammeligen van prins Frederik Hendrik van Oranje's erkende zoon Frederik van Nassau, 1st Heer van Zuylestein (The Hague, 1909).

night of 12 October : he was cornered in a farm-house and hacked to death. ¹¹

His son William Henry, now Lord of Zuylestein at the age of twenty three, had entered the army as a Cavalry Captain only a month before. He had inherited his father's affable charm and handsome appearance, as well as the favour of William III. ¹² Having been childhood playmates, the two cousins remained close companions, and Zuylestein's loyalty was repaid by military promotion. He became a Major in William's own Life Guards in 1674, and by 1682 had become the Prince's Adjutant-General. ¹³

The younger Zuylestein followed his father's example in marrying an Englishwoman, who was by an odd coincidence Maid of Honour to another English Princess, but this time the circumstances were sadly different. Since 1678, and encouraged by William, Zuylestein had been busily courting a wealthy and beautiful heiress, Elizabeth Pompe, who exactly fitted William's notion of a suitable match for his lifelong friend. However, Zuylestein was also flirting at the Hague with one Jane Wroth, a plain and penniless Maid of Honour to William's English wife, the Princess Mary. The result of this dalliance was that in 1680 Jane became pregnant. Zuylestein is reported to have been frantic with rage and vexation at the thought of losing his heiress, and William sympathized, instructing Zuylestein to ignore Jane's demands of marriage. The extent of Princess Mary's intervention is not clear, but her Chaplain Ken finally prevailed upon Zuylestein to marry Jane while William

11. Robb, William of Orange, I, p.266. Baxter, William III, p.95.

12. Robb, William of Orange, I, p.114. The portrait reproduced in Marjorie Bowen's William, Prince of Orange, opposite p.262, as William Frederick (sic) Nassau de Zuylestein, is now thought to be of the elder Zuylestein, c.1665, possibly by Pieter Nason, but certainly not by Lely. Formerly at Zuylestein, it is now kept along with a named portrait of William Henry at nearby Amerongen, estate of the late Count van Aldenburg-Bentinck. I owe this point to Jonkheer Kretschmar of the Stichting Iconografisch Bureau.

13. W.M.C. Regt, "Nassau-Zuylestein", in Genealogische en Heraldische Bladen (1907), pp.491-492.

was absent at Amsterdam in February 1681. This hasty ceremony barely preceded the birth of the child. Although William was greatly angered on his return to discover what had happened, he soon accepted the fait accompli, and the Zuylesteins emerged from disgrace to resume a favoured position at Court. ¹⁴

The Zuylestein child was a daughter, Anna, but a son and heir was born in the following year who was named after his father ; this younger William Henry (1682-1710) later became the second Earl of Rochford. These were the earliest of eight surviving children. ¹⁵ Though it was productive, the marriage does not seem to have been happy : Zuylestein's libidinous private life caused Jane to seek solace in drink, and she finally became mentally unstable after the birth of her last child. ¹⁶

In public life, Zuylestein remained a boon companion to William III. One recent writer describes Zuylestein thus : "handsome, witty and polite, but incurably lazy and self-indulgent, he was often a disappointment but never lost William's affection." ¹⁷ In return however, Zuylestein gave William unswerving personal loyalty, and rendered useful service in the preliminaries to the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688-89, justifying the trust William placed in him and further illustrating the close connexion between the Nassau-Zuylestein family and the House of Orange.

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14. Robb, William of Orange, II, The Later Years, 1674-1702 (London, 1966), pp.163-165, is the best recent account, based on the Zoutelandt Memoires (1710), and Huygens's Correspondance, VIII, 319, and Journaal, IV, 74. See also E. Hamilton, William's Mary ; A Biography of Mary II (London, 1972), pp.109-110. Earlier accounts appear in Strickland's Lives of the Queens of England (London, 1877), V, 437-438 (naming Zuylestein's wife as Mary Worth), and in Plumptre's Life of Ken, I, 144. Brief mention occurs in Spence's Observations, Anecdotes, etc., edited by J.M. Osborn (Oxford, 1966), I, 329.
15. For the remaining members of the family, see Arthur Collins, The Peerage of England (5th edition, London, 1779), IV, 142.
16. Robb, William of Orange, II, p.164.
17. Robb, William of Orange, II, p.226.

Zuylestein twice carried official letters from the House of Orange to the English royal family : in August 1687, to the Queen, Mary of Modena, on the death of her mother, and again in June 1688 on the birth of a son to James II. On both occasions, Zuylestein held private discussions with leading English politicians, who entrusted him with secret letters expressing the nation's discontent under James and their personal support for the protestant House of Orange. ¹⁸

The assurances conveyed by these letters were instrumental in helping William to decide to take an army across to England, so that Zuylestein's preliminary reconnaissance work is not without significance. Though he attended William throughout, his role in the remainder of the "Revolution" was not nearly so vital ; his most notable task was to carry William's terms to Whitehall on 16 December 1688, shortly before James fled the country. ¹⁹

William and Mary accepted the offer of the Crown on 13 February 1689, and were formally proclaimed King and Queen of England on 11 April. In demonstration of his continued loyalty, Zuylestein became naturalized on 11 May, as William Henry Nassau de Zuylestein. On 23 May, he was rewarded with a Court appointment as Master of the Robes. Also about this time he was made Secretary for foreign dispatches to Holland and Germany, but unlike some of William's closer associates such as Bentinck, he was not as yet given an English peerage. For the next five years, Zuylestein served his kingly cousin as a soldier. ²⁰

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18. M. Ashley, The Glorious Revolution of 1688 (London, 1966), pp. 87, 91-92, quoting Dalrymple's Memoirs (London, 1753), II, 200. See also Danby's Letters, edited by A. Browning (Glasgow, 1951), II, 118-119, and Strickland, Lives of the Queens of England, V, 33, 56.
 19. Zuylestein was promoted Major-General in the Dutch army for his work in London ; Robb, William of Orange, II, 261. For Zuylestein's movements during the revolution, see Burnet's History of His Own Times, II, 479, 506 ; Ashley, Glorious Revolution, 118, 123, 127, 160-176, 197 ; Baxter, William III, 241-249.
 20. Collins, Peerage, IV, 141-142 ; Robb, William of Orange, II, 289-290.

Leaving his wife and family in their apartments at Hampton Court, Zuylestein accompanied William on his summer campaign in Ireland in 1690, where his regiment fought at the Boyne in July.²¹ He then served in Flanders, and was given command of the Dutch Cavalry in December 1691.²² Such service often kept Zuylestein away from Court, where other favourites had appeared now that William III was King of England. Early in 1695, Zuylestein was asked to relinquish his office of Master of the Robes in favour of van Keppel, soon to be created first Earl of Albemarle. But Zuylestein yielded his office with good grace, and in recompense, on 10 May 1695, he was himself made Baron Enfield, Viscount Tunbridge, and first Earl of Rochford.²³

The new Earl of Rochford took his seat in the House of Lords on 20 February 1696.²⁴ Since he lacked any substantial personal fortune, the title had been accompanied by a grant of part of the lands of the exiled Powis family, including Powis Castle in Montgomeryshire, as well as a yearly pension of £ 1000 and some confiscated lands in Ireland.²⁵ These grants enabled the new Earl to purchase a small estate at Easton in Suffolk, which was to remain in the family far longer than Powis or the Irish lands.²⁶

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21. Hamilton, William's Mary (1972), p.220 ; Robb, William of Orange, II, 316. He carried letters to London in August 1690, where Queen Mary received him "so tanned he frights me." D.N.B. XXI, 1342. He made a brief visit to Holland with William in January 1691 ; see Narcissus Luttrell, A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs, 1678-1714 (Oxford, 1857), II, 165, 230.
 22. He was wounded at Neerwinden in July 1693, but his regiment was again ordered to Flanders in November ; Luttrell, Brief Relation, II, 318, 369 ; III, 146, 150, 151, 157, 225.
 23. Luttrell, Brief Relation, III, 467 ; Collins, Peerage, IV, 142.
 24. Journal of the House of Lords, XV, 675 ; Luttrell, IV, 20.
 25. Luttrell, Brief Relation, III, 467, 470, 472 ; D.N.B. XXI, 1343.
 26. Easton was bought from the Wingfield family, who had built the white-brick mansion about 1630 ; see White's Gazetteer of Suffolk (1844), pp.184-185. The White House was demolished about 1924, having been the residence of the Dukes of Hamilton.

After the death of William III in 1702, the first Earl of Rochford retired to Zuytlestein, where his Lady, the unfortunate Jane Wroth, died in the following year.²⁷ Apart from a short visit to England in 1705, possibly to inspect the murals being painted by Lanscroon at Powis Castle in that year,²⁸ Rochford continued to live in seclusion at Zuytlestein, his health steadily deteriorating, until his death on 12 July 1708.²⁹

He was succeeded as Earl of Rochford by his eldest son and namesake, William Henry (1682-1710), who had already made a name for himself as Viscount Tunbridge, which he had been styled since 1695. Because of his father's illness, Tunbridge had in 1697 taken over the post of Secretary for foreign dispatches to Holland and Germany, and later that year he was sent to Paris to prepare for the embassy of William Bentinck, first Earl of Portland.³⁰ But this early taste of diplomatic business does not seem to have attracted Tunbridge, who like his father and grandfather chose a military career.

Thanks to the patronage of his father's friend Ormonde, Tunbridge was appointed Aide de Camp to Marlborough in time for the Flanders campaign of 1704. Marlborough thought well of Tunbridge, describing him as "un jeune seigneur qui promet beaucoup", and gave him the honour of carrying to Queen Anne the report of the victory at Blenheim.³¹ Ormonde having obtained his commission as Lieutenant-Colonel in the Guards in January 1705, Tunbridge repaid this favour by keeping Ormonde supplied with choice wines from

27. He landed in Holland 23 August 1702 ; Collins, Peerage, IV, p.142.

28. See Mark Girouard's article on Powis, Country Life Annual (1967)p.28.

29. Collins, Peerage, IV, p.142 ; The Complete Peerage gives 2 July.

30. Luttrell, Brief Relation, IV, 305, 320.

31. He arrived in London on 15 August 1704 ; J.W.E. Doyle, The Official Baronage of England (London, 1886), III, p.163, citing Marlborough's Dispatches, I, p.445. See also the D.N.B., XXI, p.1343.

Holland during that year. Also in 1705, Tunbridge had been elected M.P. for Kilkenny in the Irish Parliament, and in May 1708 he was elected for Steyning in Sussex. ³²

On the death of his father in July 1708, Tunbridge succeeded as the second Earl of Rochford, and took his seat in the House of Lords on 16 November 1708. ³³ He did not, however, enjoy his earldom long. In 1709 he led his regiment to Spain, where he was soon promoted Brigadier-General. But he was killed on 27 July 1710 "in the hour of victory" at the battle of Almenara, still unmarried. ³⁴

The Rochford title thereupon descended more swiftly than expected to the next brother, Frederick (1684-1738). Though a Knight of Utrecht, Frederick was not a professional soldier, and had led the life of a country gentleman at Zuylestein. He now came over to settle in England, at Powis Castle. It is thought that the formal terraced gardens in the Dutch style which are so notable a feature at Powis were completed by the third Earl of Rochford. ³⁵

Frederick was married at Somerset House on 3 August 1714 to Elizabeth (Bessy) Savage, a natural daughter of Richard Savage, fourth Earl of Rivers. ³⁶ It seems to have been a calculating match, for Bessy was aged only fifteen and was then the principal beneficiary of her father's Will. Rivers had died in 1712, leaving

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32. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, series 36, Ormonde MSS, new series VIII, pp.58-193 passim, calendars the correspondence between Tunbridge and Ormonde across 1704 and 1705.
33. Journal of the House of Lords, XVIII, p.576. Barely three weeks after his father died, Tunbridge enlisted Ormonde's help towards renewing the pension William III had granted for the support of the title ; H.M.C. 36 Ormonde MSS, new series VIII, p.315.
34. D.N.B., XXI, p.1343, corrects earlier references which say that he was killed at Almanza.
35. Collins, Peerage, IV, p.143. On the gardens at Powis, see Alicia Amherst, A History of Gardening in England (1896), p.266.
36. On Rivers, see D.N.B., XVII, pp.831-833, under Savage. Bessy's mother, Elizabeth Colleton, gave consent for her marriage to the third Earl of Rochford ; see The Complete Peerage, XI, p.53.

lands and debts equally vast. The Will was contested by the Earl of Barrymore, on behalf of his infant daughter ; her mother, who had died in childbirth, was Rivers's only legitimate daughter. After a costly suit in Chancery, a private Act of 1721 divided the inheritance more equitably ; the Cheshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire lands went to Penelope Barry, while the Essex estates were vested in Bessy Rochford and her descendants. ³⁷

The chief part of these Essex estates, the historic ruined priory at St Osyth, was already the main Rochford residence, in anticipation of the return of Powis Castle to the pardoned Powis family in 1722. At St Osyth, the third Earl of Rochford commenced renovations and added a new wing which completed the north-west corner of the quadrangle. St Osyth now became the principal seat of the Nassau-Zuylestein family in England, and remained so until the mid-nineteenth century. ³⁸

Little is known of the third Earl of Rochford. He did not take his seat in the Lords until 1713, and apart from some very minor election correspondence in 1734 seems not to have taken an active part in politics. ³⁹ One nearly contemporary report claims he was "honoured and esteemed among the Peers, and by all who knew him, for his affable deportment and friendly character." ⁴⁰ This estimation agrees with his appearance in a portrait of 1735, though his geniality was apparently attended by nervousness. ⁴¹

37. The Act is 7 George I, c.11 ; see Pickering, The Statutes at Large (Cambridge, 1765), XIV (the private acts are merely listed at the front). The provisions of the Act are given in J. Watney, "St Osyth's Priory", Essex Archaeological Society Transactions, V (1873), pp. 43-44. (previously printed privately, London, 1871.)
38. The Rochford wing was demolished about 1858 ; Watney, "St Osyth's Priory", pp. 44-45.
39. H.M.C. Reports, Series 63, Egmont Diary, pp. 84, 86-87, 93.
40. Collins, Peerage (5th edition, 1779), IV, p. 143.
41. Signed by B. Dandridge, at Brodick Castle, Isle of Arran, now in care of the National Trust for Scotland. From a misreading of the date for 1755, this has long been accepted as the fourth Earl ; F.G.L.O. van Kretschmar rectified the dating in 1966. (correspondence in the files of the National Portrait Gallery, London.)

The third Earl's younger brother Henry had also settled in England after graduating at Leyden in 1728, and rose to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the British army. He acquired several properties from his brother, notably the estate at Easton in Suffolk, and the manors of Weeley and Clacton Magna near St Osyth in Essex. Henry remained a bachelor at his death in 1740. ⁴²

The death of the third Earl of Rochford occurred in London on 14 June 1738, at his house in Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. ⁴³ His widow Bessy, now Dowager Countess of Rochford, immediately remarried in that same year, her second husband being an old family friend, the Reverend Philip Carter. Bessy continued to live at St Osyth until her own death in 1746. ⁴⁴

42. E. Peacock, Index to English-speaking Students graduated from Leyden University (London, 1883), p.73 ; Henry lived at Clacton Magna from 1729 to 1740, where he signed the Vestry Minutes from 1735, but his Will (1738) describes him "of Weeley." See K. Walker's note in Essex Review, LX (1951), pp.45-6.

43. Collins, Peerage, IV, 143.

44. Carter is usually described as being of Tunstall, Suffolk, where he became Rector in 1722 ; it is near Easton. He wrote a popular ballad in honour of Bessy Rochford, "At St Osyth by the Mill", noted in the Gentlemen's Magazine (1781), p.490 ; it is printed as an Appendix in J. Watney, St Osyth's Priory (1871), p.119. Though the D.N.B., XXI, 1344, states that Bessy was his widow at her death, a Philip Carter appears in Rochford legal documents after this date ; Essex Record Office, D/DC, r.T.1., and K. Walker, "The Nassau Family of St Osyth," Essex Review, LI (1942), p.77.

II.

The fourth Earl of Rochford, who succeeded to the title in June 1738, was born at St Osyth on 27 September 1717.⁴⁵ His younger brother, Richard Savage Nassau, was born in 1723 ; they were the only surviving children of Bessy Savage and the third Earl of Rochford. In the absence of family papers, nothing is yet known of the fourth Earl's childhood, save that he was brought up at St Osyth and attended Eton College from 1725 to 1732 as Viscount Tunbridge.⁴⁶ While his headmaster there was the famous Dr George, Rochford's education may not have been solely academic, for in 1729 the College suffered a serious rebellion with some rioting.⁴⁷

Several of Rochford's contemporaries at Eton later attained high office as Secretaries of State, notably Conway, Halifax, and Sandwich, with whom Rochford had close dealings before reaching that office himself. Richard Neville Aldworth, who became Bedford's Under-Secretary, claimed Rochford, Sandwich, and Orford (Horace Walpole) amongst his intimates at Eton. Walpole's lifelong dislike of Rochford may have had some childish origin here.⁴⁸

The six formative years of Rochford's life after leaving Eton, until he succeeded as the fourth Earl, remain largely obscure. He is not to be found on either the Oxford or Cambridge lists,⁴⁹

⁴⁵. D.N.B., XXI, p.1344, gives only the Old Style date, 17 September, and Collins, Peerage, IV, p.143, gives both styles, 16/27 September, but from an autograph letter in my possession, dated 18 September 1758 at "St Osyth by the Mill", it is clear that Rochford celebrated his birthday on the 27th.

⁴⁶. Eton College Register, Part I, 1698-1752, edited by R.A. Austen-Leigh (Eton, 1927), pp.345-346. The Complete Peerage, XI, p.54, notes that there is no evidence for the claim in the D.N.B. that Rochford attended Westminster School ; but his uncle Henry, his brother Richard, and his nephew William Henry, all did so (see Baker and Stenning, The Record of Old Westminsters, II, p.683.

⁴⁷. H.C. Maxwell-Lyte, A History of Eton College (1877), pp. 296-304.

⁴⁸. Eton College Register, Part I, under Sunbury for Halifax and under Hinchinbroke for Sandwich ; D.N.B. XL, pp.298-299 under Neville.

⁴⁹. Foster, Alumni Oxonienses (London, 1887-88), and Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses . . . to 1900 (Cambridge, 1922-54).

but there is evidence to suggest that he may have studied in Switzerland in these years, which would account for his excellent command of French. ⁵⁰

Upon his succession to the earldom in 1738, Rochford was appointed one of His Majesty's Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, with a salary of £ 1,000 a year. ⁵¹ He took his seat in the House of Lords on Thursday 1 February 1739, and dutifully attended almost every day for the next two months. ⁵² He returned for a few days in April, but apart from the Dinely divorce case early in May, Rochford did not attend for the remainder of that session. His subsequent attendance at the Lords was sporadic to say the least, and in this he was not unusual. ⁵³

After 1740, Rochford had good reason for spending much of his time in the country, for in April that year his uncle Henry died at Easton in Suffolk, leaving Rochford his sole heir. ⁵⁴ The most valuable part of this legacy was of course Easton itself, and while his mother continued to live at St Osyth, Rochford made Easton his favourite retreat. Here, he and his brother Richard could indulge their fondness for riding, hunting, and shooting.

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50. In 1749 Rochford received a very cordial invitation to revisit the family of M. Maurice, Professor of Divinity at Geneva (see below, pp. 25-26) ; whilst at Turin, he had "Swiss friends" to dinner, and sought a post for his "friend", a Professor of Divinity at Lausanne ; Nassau Papers, D/45 and D/57, Rochford to Villettes, 6 January and 17 March 1751. I have not yet seen the Album Studiosorum Academiae Lausannensis, 1537-1837, edited by Junod (1837)
51. Collins, Peerage, IV, p.143 ; D.N.B., XXI, p.1344 ; The Complete Peerage, XI, p.54. The Jervas portrait at Brodick Castle identified as the third Earl may in fact be the encoronation portrait of the fourth Earl of Rochford ; Kretschmar (see note 4 above).
52. Journal of the House of Lords, XXV, pp.278-327.
53. Journal of the House of Lords, XXV-XXVI, passim ; see also A.S. Turberville, The House of Lords in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1927), Introduction.
54. The Will was proven 20 May 1740 ; Ref. Spurway 132 ; the D.N.B. follows Collins, Peerage, IV, p.142, in giving 1741 for Henry's death.

Rochford's pleasure in horses is most interestingly signified in a portrait of 1741, showing him with a racehorse and his groom ; the parish church and the White House at Easton are clearly depicted in the background. ⁵⁵

Rochford's inheritance from his uncle was also timely for quite another reason, for in May 1742 Rochford was married to Lucy Younge, one of the Maids of Honour to the Princess of Wales. ⁵⁶ They had obviously known each other for some time before, and since Lucy brought no fortune to the marriage, it may have been a love-match. ⁵⁷ Her father was of substantial gentry stock, though not wealthy, and seems to have evinced some anxiety at his daughter's marriage to an extravagant young noble. ⁵⁸

Lucy evidently thought Rochford worth the risk. She was herself "Rather a remarkable person ; a lady of free manners who said and did whatever she pleased ; but as her husband took no exceptions and she was clever and entertaining, she kept her place in general society." ⁵⁹ Presumably, wedding portraits

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55. Signed and dated, T. Bardwell, 1741 ; Brodick Castle, Isle of Arran. See also J. Pinkerton, "Sporting Pictures at Brodick," Scottish Art Review, XII, no.3.
56. Essex Record Office, D/DC, 27/729-730, reciting Rochford's Marriage Settlement of 9 - 10 May 1742. The D.N.B., XXI, p.1345, and The Complete Peerage, XI, p.54, give 1740, repeating the error on the Rochford monument in St Osyth parish church ; the inscription also makes Rochford "Ambassador to the Court of France, A.D. 1763" (he went to Madrid in 1763 and to Paris in 1766), "Ambassador to the Court of Vienna, A.D. 1768" (which he never was), and "Secretary of State . . A.D. 1776" (he was appointed 1768, and retired 1775).
57. Horace Walpole wrote to Mann, 20 May 1742, "Did I tell you that Lord Rochford has at last married Miss Young ? I say at last, for they don't pretend to have been married this twelvemonth, but were publicly married last week." Walpole Correspondence, edited by W.S. Lewis (Yale, 1937-), XVII, p.431.
58. Edward Younge, of Durnford, Wiltshire. He was later Bath King of Arms ; see R.C. Hoare, Modern History of Wiltshire (1822-24), II, p.125. The Marriage Settlement awarded Lucy an annuity of £ 500 ; Essex Record Office, D/DC, 27/729-730. The D.N.B., XXI, p. 1344, gives no authority for Rochford's extravagance other than a report of his pawning plate at Madrid, but the reference given is either a misprint or a confusion. His career leaves little doubt of his extravagance however.
59. Lady Louisa Stuart, Notes on Jesse's Selwyn, edited by W.S. Lewis, (New York, 1928), p.10.

would have been painted, though the originals are apparently lost,⁶⁰ but pieces still survive of a set of armorial porcelain bearing the Nassau-Zuytlestein arms impaling those of Younge, which Rochford ordered from China in celebration of his marriage.⁶¹

Rochford and Lucy adopted Easton for their residence, as is shown in their surviving correspondence, light-hearted and intimate, with the actor David Garrick in 1744 and 1745. This precious handful of letters reveals an established household at Easton, including Rochford's brother Richard and Lucy's mother Mrs Younge.

Delighted that Garrick will be with them for her Lord's birthday in September 1744, for which reason he has obviously visited Easton before, Lucy reminds him of her mother's "Abusive Temper", now devoted to calling the King of Prussia names, then adds characteristically ; "God knows what I'm writing, for my L^d & Mr Nassau are playing at Backgammon & to that Noise they add a most terrible one of their voices." However, in relating Rochford's return to Easton from London that Sunday, she archly concedes that he is "not an unwelcome Guest."⁶²

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60. The only known portrait of Lucy Rochford, now at Heeze Castle, North Brabant, is thought to be a copy of her wedding portrait. Also at Heeze is a painting of the fourth Earl, marked in dorso "Earl of Rochford, aged 25, 1743", which may be the companion copy. This painting bears a strong resemblance to a portrait of his mother, "Bessy, Countess of Rochford", mezzotint by J. Smith after d'Agar, 1723 (British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings).
61. Essex Record Office, T/G, 102/29, Notes and Correspondence of Alfred Hills, Esq., on Armorial Porcelain relating to Essex families. There appear to have been at least three sets of Rochford porcelain ; the first obtained by the third Earl about 1735, with the Nassau-Zuytlestein arms and the motto "Spes durat Avorum" ; the second set mentioned here, including the Younge arms, with the correct motto ; and the famous set of 1754, lacking the Younge arms, with the motto as "Spes durat Amorum." (see below, p.37.)
62. Lucy Rochford to Garrick, Easton, 29 August 1744 ; Garrick Papers, Forster Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London ; XXXV, fos.20-22. Her mother was Lucy Chetwynd, daughter of John Chetwynd of Ingestre, Staffordshire ; The Complete Peerage, III, pp.188-189, and the D.N.B., IV, pp.213-214.

Rochford's own letters to Garrick are so spirited and intimate as to be rather bawdy in places, but their informality provides us with one or two unique insights into Rochford's youthful attitudes and personality. In one letter, he carries a witticism about birthdays to its logical extreme, then breaks off, "by god, I think I am got into a damned absurd stile," but he adds reflectively, "tho' hang it Im sincere too, for I make few professions where I dont mean them . . . for theres more got I believe by plain dealing than all the Hypocrisy in the world." ⁶³

Elsewhere he agrees with Garrick that a cheerful outlook on life is essential to happiness, and confesses his dislike of melancholy people ; "when I see a man of a Gloomy disposition, I am apt to suspect he has done something wrong." But he quickly distinguishes between people who are "Naturally gloomy, sans scavoir pourquoi, & those who have met with distresses & accidents in Life ; they are indeed to be pitied." Rochford reserves his deepest aversion for those silent melancholy men who are "Observers of ones words & actions, & never communicate anything they know themselves, not even to those they call their dearest friends ; such men are born Natural spies, & I believe the Devil had a hand in their Creation." ⁶⁴

Rochford's friendship with Garrick presumably commenced with the actor's triumph at Goodman's Fields, which attracted the interest of other fashionable young nobles, including Rochford's Eton contemporaries Halifax and Sandwich, ⁶⁵ but for Rochford,

63. Garrick Papers, XXXV, fos.23-24, Rochford to Garrick, Easton, 30 August 1744.

64. Garrick Papers, XXXV, fos.30-32, Rochford to Garrick, n.d. but probably 1744 from the references to Mrs Cibber and Peg Woffington, on whom see Carola Oman, David Garrick (London, 1958).

65. The Letters of David Garrick, edited by Little and Kahrl (New York, 1963), I, Introduction, p.lviii.

the attachment was sustained by a genuine love of the theatre. In October 1745 he is found lamenting to Garrick that Fleetwood's "absurd" shows were bringing ridicule on Drury Lane, and he entreats his "little David" to return and slay this Goliath, and take command of the "undisciplined Rabble" himself. Rochford had even remonstrated with the manager, whom he found drunk, and was tempted to strike him, but for the thought that it would be said of Garrick, "you sent y^r Bully." ⁶⁶

Rochford and Garrick remained firm friends throughout Rochford's lifetime. Whilst at Turin in 1753, Rochford offered to obtain for Garrick a troupe of Italian dancers, and in 1769 he sent Garrick a copy of a new play by the French dramatist Beaumarchais, whom Rochford had befriended at Madrid in the 1760s, adding this revealing comment ; "I believe his play of Eugénie is a very good one for this single reason that I, though a minister & of course a hardhearted dog, cried & howled at it most shamefully ; if you laugh at it, it will turn out a tragy comedy ; I hope this will find you in a laughing mood." ⁶⁷

When Garrick decided he should enlist during the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, his immediate choice for a patron was Rochford. His patron, though flattered, was also embarrassed, for while Rochford's sentiments were staunchly Hanoverian, he did not intend to raise a regiment himself, explaining "I much doubt whether anything that could be raised here would prevent a mischief." ⁶⁸

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66. Garrick Papers, XXXV, fos.25-6, Rochford to Garrick, 31 October 1745.
67. Garrick to George Garrick, 16 July 1753, Harvard College Library, printed in the Letters edited by Little and Kahrl (New York, 1963), I, pp.194-195 ; Rochford to Garrick, 7 April 1769, autograph letter in the Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.
68. Rochford to Garrick, 31 October 1745 (note 66) ; see also Carola Oman, David Garrick, pp.82, 91.

Rochford was disappointed that the Young Pretender managed to escape to France, but consoled his patriotism by attending the trial of rebel Peers at the House of Lords in July 1746.⁶⁹ Only the month before, on 23 June, his mother had died at St Osyth, leaving the Essex properties to Rochford and a large private income to his younger brother Richard.⁷⁰ Perhaps with some reluctance, having settled so well at Easton, Rochford now took up residence at St Osyth, where he and Lucy presumably entertained as prominent members of the polite society of the county.

Foremost among the Rochfords' county friends were the Maynards of Walthamstow,⁷¹ Sir George Vandeput, later of Twickenham,⁷² William Windham of Wenham, and the notorious Richard Rigby of Mistley on the Stour.⁷³ These last two bachelors were also friends of David Garrick, who planned his summer tour to take in their estates as well as Rochford's.⁷⁴

Rochford, Rigby, and Windham were together joint patrons of rural sports in their various localities, and there is record of a return cricket match on Bentley Green in 1748 between Rigby

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69. Journal of the House of Lords, XXVI, pp.614-631.
70. Gentlemans Magazine, June 1746, p.328 ; D.N.B., XXI, p. 1344. The Rochford lands occupied much of the Tendring Hundred ; they are detailed in J. Watney, "St Osyth's Priory," Essex Archaeological Society Transactions, V (1873), p.45. Rochford had already sold an earlier inheritance, Loughton, near Waltham, for £ 24,000 ; Essex Record Office, D/DC, 27/729-730, Conveyance of August 1745.
71. Sir William Maynard (1721-72), 4th Baronet, M.P. for Essex 1759-72 ; Collins, Peerage, IV, pp.275-276 ; The History of Parliament, The House of Commons, 1754-90, edited by Namier and Brooke, III, pp.123-124.
72. On Vandeput, see Burke's Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies (1838) ; he appears as a witness on several Rochford legal documents in Essex Record Office, D/DC, r.T.1.
73. On Windham (1717-61), see the D.N.B. XXI, pp.642-643 ; on Rigby (1722-88), who was later Paymaster-General, see the D.N.B. XVI, pp.1188-1190, and Horace Walpole's Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George II (London, 1847), passim.
74. Carola Oman, David Garrick, p.72.

and a team from Mistley, and Rochford's team from St Osyth.⁷⁵ Rochford and Rigby both owned racing yachts, and on one occasion Rigby won a considerable wager from Rochford after successfully piloting his yacht "through all the sands" between Harwich and London bridge.⁷⁶ It was very likely his proximity to the sea at St Osyth and his possession of an ocean-going yacht which brought Rochford his appointment in 1748 as Vice-Admiral of the coasts of Essex.⁷⁷

Social custom and Rochford's duties at Court inevitably meant that his year was divided between town and country. In London, the Rochfords lived at Berkeley Square : presumably the proceeds of the sale of Loughton in 1745 enabled him to build or to purchase the house at No. 48 in that year or soon after.⁷⁸

Rochford's neighbour at No. 49 was the Dowager Duchess of Hamilton, who in 1751 remarried, choosing none other than his own younger brother, Richard Savage Nassau.⁷⁹ Their son, William Henry Nassau (1754-1830), later became the fifth and last Earl of Rochford.⁸⁰

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75. See "The History of Three Parishes ; Lawford, Manningtree, Mistley," (1953), Manningtree Branch, W.E.A. I owe this reference to Mr Kenneth Walker, of Romford, Essex.
76. This undated snippet I also owe to Mr Walker, who had it from an old notebook lent him by one Mr Kennell.
77. Doyle, Baronage (1885), III, p.164 ; The Complete Peerage, XI, p. 54 ; D.N.B., XXI, p.1344.
78. There is a photograph dated 1893 in the files of the National Buildings Record, Great College Street, Westminster, which may be of Rochford's original house ; the site has since been rebuilt upon. Hugh Philips, Mid-Georgian London (1964), pp.254, 304, using the evidence of fragmentary rate-books, lists the Earl of Powis at 48 from 1748 to 1750, and the Earl of Rochford (sic) from 1751 to 1777. Since the houses in this part of the square were built in 1745, it is possible that Rochford occupied No.48 from that year, but let it to Powis when he went to Turin in 1749.
79. Elizabeth Anne Spencer (d.1771) of Rendlesham, Suffolk, was the widow of James, Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, who died in 1743 ; see Collins, Peerage, I, p.455.
80. Their first child was a daughter, Lucy (b.1752), who died unmarried. On the younger son George (1756-1823), see the D.N.B., XL, p.119, and the Gentlemen's Magazine, XCIII (1823), pp.173-175.

In London society, the fourth Earl of Rochford and his Lady appear to have identified themselves chiefly with the Duke of Cumberland's set. Lucy may have been having an affaire with the Duke,⁸¹ but she also had a flirtation with his brother-in-law, the Prince of Hesse, who by June 1746 was being called "the drop to Lady Rochford's earring."⁸² Some thought it was to pique Lucy that Cumberland gave a ball at Vauxhall for one of her rivals in August that year.⁸³ Yet in spite of this brief lapse, Lucy apparently recovered the Duke's affections, and her husband was only too willing to assist her in this.⁸⁴

Cumberland's political importance in these years is easily obscured by his unpopularity after Culloden, but his influence at Court was very great, and whilst his brother Frederick, Prince of Wales, remained a focus of opposition to the ministers of the Crown, Cumberland's association with Bedford and Sandwich represented to some the beginnings of a 'Court party' as a more loyal alternative to the Leicester House faction.⁸⁵

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81. Horace Walpole wrote of Lucy : "All the Royals have been in love with her, but the Duke was so in all the forms, till she was a little too much pleased with her conquest of his brother in law, the Prince of Hesse." Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XX, p.58.
82. Mrs Osborn (Sarah Byng), Political and Social Letters, edited by Emily Osborn (London, 1890), p.90, Letter xxxvii, 14 June 1746.
83. Walpole noted on 5 August 1746 : "The Duke gave his ball last night to Peggy Banks at Vauxhall ; it was to pique my Lady Rochford in return for the Prince of Hesse." Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), IX, p.42. When Boswell visited Hesse-Cassel in 1764, he was told that the Prince's separation from his wife had been caused in part by "une dame d'honneur Anglaise", presumably Lucy Rochford ; Boswell on the Grand Tour, Germany and Switzerland, edited by F.A. Pottle (Yale, 1953), p.150 and note.
84. Walpole wrote to Montagu, 3 November 1746 : "Don't expect news, for I know no more than a newspaper . . is it news that my Lord Rochford is an oaf ? He has got a set of plate buttons for his birthday clothes with the Duke's head in every one - sure my good Lady carries her art too far to make him so great a Dupe! " Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), IX, pp.48-49.
85. Coxe, Memoirs of . . Henry Pelham (London, 1829), II, p.385 ; Walpole, Memoirs of . . George II (London, 1822), I, pp.1-2 ; Dorothy Marshall, Eighteenth Century England (1962), pp.227-229.

Rochford's choice of Cumberland as a patron reflects both his lifelong habit of personal loyalty to the Crown and his deep aversion to the labyrinthine paths of political faction. He had not hitherto been conspicuously active in politics, though it is said he inherited strong Whig views.⁸⁶ Thus it seems more than mere coincidence that Rochford's attendance at the House of Lords became markedly more regular from 1746, though he made no mark there as an orator, and that in 1747 his brother Richard successfully stood for Colchester as a Government supporter on Rochford's "interest."⁸⁷

Rochford's ultimate ambition, nakedly obvious in later years but probably formed about this time, was nothing less than a Cabinet post, preferably as Secretary of State.⁸⁸ It was to this end that he decided to enter the diplomatic service, since ambassadorial service was a recognised apprenticeship for such office in the first half of the eighteenth century.⁸⁹ Rochford later reminded Cumberland of this : "the motives I proposed to myself by entering into this way of life were not Lucrative, but merely to make myself acquainted with Business."⁹⁰

Here lay the value of Cumberland's patronage : his influence with the King and his ministers could advance Rochford's name as

86. D.N.B., XXI, p.1344.

87. Journal of the House of Lords, XXVII, pp.143-366, passim. On Richard Savage Nassau and the Colchester election, see The History of Parliament, The House of Commons, 1715-1754, edited by Romney Sedgwick, II, p.289 ; and ibid., The House of Commons, 1754-1790, edited by L. Namier and J. Brooke, III, p.193.

88. Whilst Ambassador at Paris, 1766-68, Rochford was visibly impatient to be appointed Secretary of State, and made no secret of his ambition ; see Lettres de Mme du Deffand à Horace Walpole, edited by P. Toynbee (London, 1912), I, pp.285, 287, 295.

89. D.B. Horn, "The Diplomatic Experience of Secretaries of State, 1660-1852", History, new series, XLI (1956), especially pp.94-96.

90. Nassau Papers, D/18, Rochford to Cumberland, 2 May 1750.

a candidate for a diplomatic posting. With the end of the War of the Austrian Succession and the signing of the peace treaties at Aix la Chapelle in April 1748, it was to be expected that a few openings might appear in the diplomatic service, especially for a young Earl who actually wanted to go abroad. Accordingly, in August 1748, Cumberland urged Newcastle to send Rochford to Lisbon in place of Keene, who was to return to Madrid ; but with characteristic parsimony, the ministry decided simply to elevate the Consul there, Keene's friend Castres, to be Chargé. ⁹¹

Cumberland's second attempt on Rochford's behalf was more successful. It was widely known that George II intended to send somebody of rank as his representative at Turin, as a compliment to his ally the King of Sardinia. Arthur Villettes, who had been Secretary there since 1734 and Minister since 1741, had been pleading for a transfer to his native Berne ever since his gross bungling of negotiations for the Treaty of Worms in 1742-3. ⁹²

Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, fretting as Envoy at Dresden, greatly desired Turin, and had asked to be moved there in February 1748 ; his request was strongly supported by Fox and Bedford. ⁹³ Bedford was regarded as Cumberland's political ally at this time, yet it is a measure of Rochford's favour with the Duke that by January 1749 it was known that Cumberland had persuaded the King and Newcastle to name Rochford for Turin. ⁹⁴ Two months later,

91. Correspondence of John, Fourth Duke of Bedford, edited by Lord John Russell (London, 1842), I, p.440, Newcastle to Bedford, 11 August 1748. See also D.B. Horn, The British Diplomatic Service, 1689-1789 (Oxford, 1961), p.154, and Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, 1689-1789, Camden Society, 3rd Series, XLVI (1932), pp.99, 134.

92. Richard Lodge, Studies in Eighteenth Century Diplomacy, 1740-1748 (London, 1930), p.50 and Chapter 2, passim.

93. D.B. Horn, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams and European Diplomacy, 1747-1758 (London, 1930), pp.41-2, 46.

94. Lord Ilchester and Mrs Langford-Brooke, Life of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams (London, 1929), pp.161-3, 166. Williams finally went to Berlin ; Horn, Representatives, p.92.

Bedford was informing Villettes of his replacement at Turin by the fourth Earl of Rochford.⁹⁵

Lord and Lady Rochford would undoubtedly have made much capital in London society from their new status before they departed for Turin. Rochford had hitherto been black-balled at White's Club, for reasons still obscure, but his new status as Envoy-designate may have helped his acceptance as a member in 1749.⁹⁶ In the same month that Horace Walpole noted Lucy "in vast beauty" at a masquerade ball at Ranelagh,⁹⁷ he wrote to his friend Sir Horace Mann, the British Minister at Florence :

" You are going to see one of our court beauties in Italy, my Lady Rochford : they are setting out on their embassy to Turin. She is large, but very handsome, with great delicacy and address . . . "

As for Rochford himself, Walpole added :

"You will not find much in the correspondence of her husband ; his person is good, and he will figure well enough as an ambassador ; better as a husband where cicisbés don't expect to be molested."⁹⁸

Despite the charge of complaisance, this was praise indeed from Walpole. But Mann was immediately delighted at the news, and commented in reply, "Lord and Lady Rochford's gaiety will be a great contrast to Villettes' solemnity."⁹⁹

95. Public Record Office, State Papers, Foreign (hereafter SP) 92/58, f.119, Bedford to Villettes, 9 March 1749 O.S.

96. W.B. Boulton, The History of White's (London, 1892), II, p.74 ; D.N.B., XXI, p.1344 ; Rochford's appointment was noted under promotions in the Daily Advertiser, 29 May 1749, and the London Magazine, XVIII (1749), p.241.

97. Walpole to Mann, 3 May 1749 O.S.; Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XX, p.49, correcting the misprint in Cunningham's edition of Walpole's Letters (1886), II, p.152.

98. Walpole to Mann, 17 May 1749 O.S.; Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XX, p.58.

99. Mann to Walpole, 25 July 1749 ; Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XX, p.76.

Once his appointment was known, Rochford would have had much to do at St Osyth, supervising the packing of his baggage, selecting servants to take with him to Italy, and setting in order the administration of the estate during his absence.¹⁰⁰ His attendance at the Lords shows that he was in London throughout March 1749, and for a few days in May, but he returned only for the last day of that session, on 13 June.¹⁰¹ Since his Instructions for Turin are dated 12 June, this would have been a likely opportunity for Bedford's verbal 'briefing', to amplify the bare formal Instructions.¹⁰² Villettes was returning to England on leave before settling at Erne, so Bedford ordered Rochford to meet Villettes in Paris early in July, there to receive a first-hand account of the Court of Turin.¹⁰³

Rochford obediently made haste, and left England early in July, arriving at Paris on the 10th.¹⁰⁴ Villettes, however, was delayed by the toils of packing in the heat of the Piedmontese summer, and doubted if he could be at Paris before 10 August. He therefore promised to prepare written Memoranda in order to prevent further delay at Paris.¹⁰⁵

100. Rochford's Steward at St Osyth was William Field (d.1783), whose mother, Arabella Savage, was yet another natural daughter of the fourth Earl of Rivers. Field also acted as Rochford's attorney after 1745; see Essex Record Office, D/DC, r.T.1. (Indenture of 6 May 1747), and K. Walker, " 'Tyburn Dick' and some Clacton Families", Essex Review, LVIII (1948-9), pp.3-6.

101. Journal of the House of Lords, XXVII, pp.291-366, passim.

102. Public Record Office, Foreign Office (hereafter FO), 90/40, f.117. The date given in Horn, Representatives, p.124 (23 June) is an understandable error; his researcher has read the regnal year, "in the Twenty Third Year of Our Reign", as the date, instead of "the Twelfth day of June, 1749", in the line above. For discussion of Rochford's Instructions, see below, p.55 and note 6.

103. SP 92/58, fos.102 and 152, Bedford to Villettes, 8 June, 13 July 1749

104. He had gone from St Osyth before 6 July when Horace Walpole visited the Priory; "it is the seat of the Rochfords, but I never chose to go while they were there." Walpole to Montagu, 5 July 1749; Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), IX, p.88.

105. SP 92/58, f.160, Villettes to Aldworth, 25 July 1749.

In addition to enjoying the delights of Europe's premier capital city, Rochford made his month's unexpected sojourn in Paris as fruitful as possible. He immediately established a close friendship with the Secretary of the British Embassy, Joseph Yorke,¹⁰⁶ who introduced Rochford to the French Foreign Minister, Puysieulx, then obtained for him an audience at Versailles on 18 July, where Rochford found the royal family "particularly gracious." The new Sardinian Ambassador to France, St Germain, had just arrived in Paris : Rochford made himself known, and in fact anticipated belated instructions from Bedford that he should do so. Rochford also enquired after the new ambassador France was to send to Turin, the Marquis de la Chetardie, and though Puysieulx promised an introduction, Chetardie had not come to town before the Rochfords departed for Turin.¹⁰⁷

Among the many visitors who called to pay their respects to Rochford in Paris was the newly-appointed British Consul for the Island of Sardinia, James Shaftoe, who carried a letter of recommendation from Bedford : in view of their dealings over the next few years, it is a pity that Rochford's first impressions of Shaftoe have not survived.¹⁰⁸

Also whilst in Paris, Rochford received a most interesting invitation. It was contained in a letter from M. Maurice, son of the Professor of Divinity at Geneva, expressing delight at Rochford's appointment to Turin : "Rien de plus agréable pour nous que la Pensée que nous aurons à la Cour de Turin un Protecteur tel que Vous." He hoped that Rochford might stay a few days with them at Geneva on his way to Turin : "J'avois souvent fait des

106. Yorke was later created Baron Dover (1788) ; see D.N.B. LXIII, 344.

107. SP 92/58, f.156, Rochford to Bedford, 21 July 1749.

108. SP 92/58, f.167, Bedford to Rochford, 3 August 1749. On Shaftoe at Cagliari, see below, Chapter 3, pp.80-85.

Vaux pour que quelque heureux Evenement nous procurât le Plaisir de vous revoir parmi nous." ¹⁰⁹ Rochford thought this would be a useful opportunity to discover at first-hand what differences existed between Turin and Geneva, ¹¹⁰ and Bedford was willing to allow this diversion, ¹¹¹ but as time went by, Rochford reluctantly decided that Villettes' long delay had left him no time for a jaunt to Geneva. Instead, he made friends with Mussard, the Genevan Commissary at Paris, who gave him much useful information. ¹¹²

Villettes at last arrived at Paris on 11 August, and though he thought his carefully prepared Memoranda precluded further comment, Rochford kept him another week, discussing and clarifying various points. ¹¹³ As soon as he was satisfied, Rochford was anxious to get to Turin "directly, as fast as possible," and he appears to have left Paris on 23 August. ¹¹⁴ Travelling by way of Lyons and the Mt Cenis Pass, the new British Envoy arrived at Turin late on the night of 9 September 1749. ¹¹⁵

109. SP 92/58, f.158, extract copy, Maurice to Rochford, n.d., with Rochford's of 21 July 1749.

110. SP 92/58, f.169, Rochford to Bedford, 20 August 1749.

111. Though he warned Rochford that the King thought "the sooner you get to Turin the better" ; SP 92/58, f.165, Bedford to Rochford, 3 August 1749.

112. SP 92/58, f.169, Rochford to Bedford, 20 August 1749.

113. SP 92/58, f.163, Villettes to Bedford, 16 August 1749.

114. SP 92/58, f.169, Rochford to Bedford, 20 August 1749.

115. SP 92/58, f.171, Rochford to Bedford, 17 September 1749.

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CHAPTER 2

Rochford as British Envoy at Turin

There was no particular building recognized as 'The British Embassy' in Turin at this time : it was the Envoy's task to find himself a suitable house, then to affix his monarch's Coat of Arms above the door, thereby securing for himself and all within the protection of his diplomatic status.¹ A suitable town house at Turin was not easily found, however, and Rochford had to live for over two months in a rented villa several miles distant before he could establish himself in the city.² No details have yet come to light regarding either the location or the cost of Rochford's house, but some indication of the difficulty and expense he may have encountered is available from 1751, when he sought a similar establishment for a visiting dignitary. The best he could find was a suite of ten rooms on the first floor of a house occupied by the Austrian Minister, which would cost 8000 livres for a five-year lease, and still not contain all the visitor's household. Rochford exclaimed, "mais les maisons sont d'une rareté inconcevable, ce qui les vend d'une cherté exorbitante."³

Evidence concerning the composition and management of Rochford's Turin household remains fragmentary and scattered.⁴

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1. D.B. Horn, The British Diplomatic Service (Oxford, 1961), p.16.
 2. SP 92/58, f.171, Rochford to Bedford, 17 September 1749 ; *ibid.*, fos.212 and 218, Rochford to Bedford, 12 and 19 November 1749. Nassau Papers, B/10, Rochford to Allen, 10 December 1749 ; *ibid.*, D/10, Rochford to Gray, 13 December 1749.
 3. Nassau Papers, D/89, Rochford to Seckendorff, 20 October 1751 ; the visitor was the Prince of Brandenburg-Anspach.
 4. Compare the detailed account in Joan Evans, "The Embassy of the Fourth Duke of Bedford to Paris, 1762-3", Archaeological Journal, CXIII (1957), pp.137-156.

While at least some of the menial servants would have been hired locally, it is clear that Rochford brought a number of servants with him from St Osyth : early in 1750 Lady Rochford had reason to send one of her maidservants back to England, and there is mention elsewhere of Rochford's running footman taking a message to Genoa.⁵ There is another isolated reference to one M. St Ferreol, who is described as "one of my Lord Rochford's Family since his Lordship has been at Turin." He was "charged with certain of my Lord's affairs," but the nature of his work, and the man himself, remain obscure.⁶

Rochford's household included his own private Chaplain, for it was one of his privileges as a Protestant Envoy in a Catholic land that he could maintain a Chapel within his house for the use of his 'Family' and fellow countrymen. Rochford's Chaplain was Louis de Visme, an Oxford graduate of Huguenot descent.⁷ In 1752 he had delivered to him at Turin a "French Common Prayer Book."⁸ The Chaplain's brother, Gerard de Visme, was also living in Rochford's household at Turin, and is known to have carried letters for Rochford elsewhere in Italy.⁹

Perhaps the most important member of the Envoy's 'Family' was his Secretary. George Charles accompanied Rochford to Turin and remained as Chargé until the arrival of Rochford's successor. Charles wrote the body of virtually all the official correspondence, copying from Rochford's untidy much crossed-out drafts in a small neat hand, admirably clear and legible. The Secretary's own

5. Nassau Papers, A/12, Birtles to Rochford, 7 February 1750 ; *ibid.*, A/59, Birtles to Rochford, 26 February 1752.

6. SP 92/90, f.126, Charles to Payzant, 5 August 1752.

7. De Visme remained with Rochford throughout his diplomatic career, and finally entered the service himself ; he was Envoy at Stockholm when he died in 1776. See D.N.B., XIV, pp.448-9.

8. Nassau Papers, A/67, Birtles to Rochford, 15 July 1752.

9. Nassau Papers, A/27, Birtles to Rochford, 10 October 1750.

dispatches during Rochford's absence in 1754 suggest that he was conscientious and diligent, but his elaborate wordiness contrasts with Rochford's own direct and succinct style. Charles may not have enjoyed good health : on one occasion Rochford had to decipher the London dispatches himself, since he had given Charles leave to visit a curative spa in the foothills. ¹⁰

For a short time, Rochford also had the services of another Secretary, George Yonge, who had just attained his majority, and was visiting Turin in the course of his Grand Tour of Italy. ¹¹ Yonge lived in the Envoy's household for several months early in 1753, and so much impressed Rochford that he was appointed Chargé when Rochford took Charles on his own brief tour of Italy that year. Yonge's father hoped that his son might remain as Rochford's Secretary, and begin a career in diplomacy, but Rochford had no desire to replace the dutiful Charles, and Yonge resumed his travels soon after the Rochfords returned to Turin. ¹²

Charles's occasional private notes to his friend George Payzant reveal that the social highlight of the year for Rochford's 'Family' and the handful of English merchants residing at Turin was the celebration of their monarch's birthday each year, on 30 October or the nearest suitable day. Rochford regularly celebrated this event with a magnificent dinner at his house, attended by

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10. SP 92/62, f.38, Charles to Holderness, 30 March 1754, Separate ; SP 92/63, f.11, Charles to Robinson, 12 February 1755 ; Nassau Papers, D/126, Rochford to Mann, 16 August 1752. See also Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, p.124. The Journal of the House of Commons, XXXII. pp.484, 492, records Charles's allowances as Chargé.
 11. Yonge was later a Governor of the Cape of Good Hope ; see D.N.B., XXI, pp.1239-40. His father, Sir William Yonge (d.1755), was a stalwart government supporter in the Commons ; D.N.B., XXI, pp. 1246-9, and Walpole, Memoirs of George II, Volume I, passim.
 12. British Museum, Additional Manuscripts (hereafter BM Add MSS), 32730, f.256, Rochford to Sir William Yonge, 11 October 1752 ; *ibid.*, f.253, Sir William Yonge to Newcastle, 17 November 1752 ; Nassau Papers, C/17, Rochford to Holderness, 18 November 1752.

members of the Court and diplomatic corps, and any English visitors who happened to be in the city. The first of these dinners, held early in November 1749, was conducted "with great magnificence, all the English appearing there in gala . ." ¹³

On such occasions, a vital member of the Envoy's household would be his Cook. It was essential for the eighteenth century diplomat to maintain an ample table, preferably an open table as well, enabling him to return hospitality and entertain a wide circle of acquaintances. Relaxed after-dinner conversation, when the wine flowed freely, offered one of the best opportunities to hear others let slip the secrets of their court. ¹⁴ Nothing is known of Rochford's kitchen staff at Turin, ¹⁵ and not much more of his regular dinner guests, ¹⁶ but there is abundant testimony that he maintained an interestingly ample table.

Though the bulk of his supplies would have been obtained from the local markets, Rochford went to considerable expense to import a number of additional items through the British Consul at Genoa, surely adding to the variety and popularity of his dinner parties. These imported foodstuffs ranged from such staples as sugar, tea, and cheeses, to rather more exotic delicacies which included smoked hams and salmon from Amsterdam, salted sprats from Yarmouth, cases of oranges and barrells of olives from Cadiz and

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13. SP 92/89, f.270, Charles to Payzant, 12 November 1749 ; SP 92/90, fos.65 and 146, Charles to Payzant, 17 November 1751, and 9 December 1752.
 14. Lord Chesterfield's Letters, edited by J. Bradshaw (London, 1892), I, 155.
 15. Rochford's Cook at St Osyth was presumably the Mr Tubman whose death is noted in the East Essex Gazette for 24 November 1754 (I owe this reference to Mr Kenneth Walker of Romford, Essex), but there is no evidence that he accompanied Rochford to Turin.
 16. Rochford names a group of "Swiss friends" who dined with him in 1751 ; Nassau Papers, D/57, Rochford to Villettes, 17 March 1754 ; but it may be assumed that other diplomats and friends at Court would have been regular guests.

Lisbon.¹⁷ If delayed, some of the more perishable items, notably the salmon, might arrive at Turin "warm & very strong", but this happened only rarely.¹⁸

As for the wine with which these expensive delicacies were washed down, Rochford found that the local burgundy was "quite tolerable",¹⁹ but he also brought in regular shipments of Rhenish wine and Dorchester beer, together with arrack from Lisbon and Amsterdam. If the wine arrived at Genoa in casks, it had to be bottled to facilitate its cartage by mule-train to Turin, which added greatly to the overall cost.²⁰

This investment, for such it was in effect, paid a good dividend in helping Rochford secure his place in Turin society. The British Envoy and his Lady were inevitably prominent in that society, from their standing in the diplomatic corps and their acceptance at Court. But Rochford went further than most, and took as his model the typical French minister, almost naturalized and welcome in all the best houses in town, rather than the typically insular English minister of Chesterfield's famous contrast, who might live seven years at the same court and not make one personal connexion there.²¹

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17. Nassau Papers, A/19, A/27, A/62, A/63, A/83, Birtles to Rochford, 8 June 1750, 10 October 1750, 29 April 1752, 20 May 1750, 12 January 1754 ; *ibid.*, B/54, Rochford to Birtles, 22 January 1752.
 18. Nassau Papers, A/58, Birtles to Rochford, 19 February 1752.
 19. Nassau Papers, D/10, Rochford to Gray, 13 December 1749.
 20. Rochford and Birtles frequently cursed the dilatoriness of Travi, the muleteer ; Nassau Papers, A/4, A/10, A/61, A/75, Birtles to Rochford, 25 October 1749, 10 January 1750, 8 April 1752, 3 February 1753 ; *ibid.*, B/4, B/12, B/33, B/45, Rochford to Birtles, 22 October 1749, 21 January 1750, 13 January 1751, 2 June 1751. One early consignment of beer cost 410 livres, while two later accounts for various foodstuffs totalled 350 and 394 livres ; Nassau Papers, A/11, A/30, A/64, Birtles to Rochford, 31 January 1750, 5 December 1750, 27 May 1752.
 21. Chesterfield's Letters, edited by J. Bradshaw (London, 1892), I, 422-3.

The international language of polite society as of diplomacy in the eighteenth century was of course French, and it is worth noting that Rochford's Secretary once wrote of that language "it is as familiar to my Lord as English."²² Rochford's family background truly made of him a 'European Englishman.' But at Turin, many visitors were dismayed to find that Piedmontese was spoken much more than French at the crowded conversazioni and card evenings which were the staple diversions almost every night of the week.²³ To judge from his occasional use of Italian phrases even in official dispatches, it seems not unlikely that Rochford may have acquired a smattering of the local dialect as a necessary entrée, especially in feminine company.²⁴

January was the busiest time of year in the social life of Turin, for this was the height of the Carnival season, with its ceaseless round of masquerade balls, concerts, opera, firework displays, and soirées.²⁵ With his love of music and dancing, Rochford must have found this a most enjoyable time. He was greatly pleased to discover that his favourite English country dances were very much in vogue in Italy, as he reported in 1752 : "the Mesdames of Savoye are so fond of English Country Dances, that there was none other danced the whole night."²⁶ The festivities ended with

22. SP 92/89, f.269, Charles to Payzant, 5 November 1749.

23. See Edward Gibbon's complaint of 16 May 1764 ; Gibbon's Letters, edited by J.E. Norton (London, 1956), I, 174. On the conversazione, see Charles de Brosses, Lettres familières sur l'Italie . . . 1740 (Paris, 1931), II, 199-200 ; Maurice Vaussard, Daily Life in Eighteenth Century Italy (London, 1962), Chapter 4 ; and D. Carutti, Storia del Regno di Carlo Emanuele III (Turin, 1859). II, 200-204.

24. BM Add MSS 32835, f.337, Rochford to Newcastle, 13 May 1752 ; SP 92/61, f.156, Rochford to Holderness, 24 October 1753, Separate.

25. Nassau Papers, D/44, Rochford to Gray, 2 January 1751 ; SP 92/59, f.17, Rochford to Bedford, 30 January 1751.

26. SP 92/60, f.56, Rochford to Amyand, 19 January 1752. Horace Walpole had noted this in 1740 ; Walpole to West, 27 February 1740, Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XIII, 201.

Lent, perhaps not before time, to judge from one of Rochford's comments : "Our Carnival here is now at an End, & Lent with all its meagre Horrors has made its appearance ; indeed, after a Carnival in this Country, Sackcloth & Ashes are extremely necessary." ²⁷

The Court of Turin in the 1750s was still regarded as one of the more congenial in Europe, however less attractive it had grown a decade later. ²⁸ Benjamin Keene at Madrid wrote to congratulate Rochford on his appointment and to "wish you & Lady Rochford all the health imaginable to amuse yourselves at so agreeable a Court." ²⁹ Rochford certainly found the Court of Turin agreeable, though his first impression found it lacking certain advantages ; "without saying more of this Court than it really deserves, it is not quite so numerous as ours, nor so brilliant (there is no Queen) for want of Ladies ; but then the excessive polite behaviour of all the royal family makes all other deficiencies less apparent." ³⁰

The King of Sardinia, Charles Emmanuel III, had remained a widower since the death of his third Queen, Elizabeth of Lorraine, in 1741, so that apart from his son and heir, Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, the royal family now consisted of three daughters and a younger son, the infant Duke of Chablais. ³¹ The three princesses

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27. Nassau Papers, D/56, Rochford to Selwyn, 27 February 1751.
28. Gibbon observed in 1764, "Everything follows the example of the Court, which from one of the most polite in Europe, is become bigotted, gloomy, and covetous." Letters, edited Norton (1956), I, 172
29. BM Add MSS 43424, f.56, copy, Keene to Rochford, 2 February 1750.
30. Rochford to Parry, 21 January 1751, printed in Notes and Queries, 2nd series, No.4 (1856), p.71.
31. Charles Emmanuel III (1701-73) was succeeded by his son the Duke of Savoy, as Victor Amadeus III (1726-96) ; see D. Carutti, Storia del Regno di Carlo Emanuele III (Turin, 1859), II, 174-180 ; F. Valsecchi, L'Italia nel Settecento (Milan, 1959), pp.307-315 ; L. Dimier, Histoire de Savoie (Paris, 1913), p.266.

were then in their early twenties, attractive and still eminently marriageable.³² Rochford found the whole royal family to be enthusiastically anglophile, and he early reported ; "their graciousness to me makes me pass my time very agreeably."³³ He was particularly delighted at one court ball when the princesses each in turn partnered him in English country dances.³⁴

Lord and Lady Rochford were also on very good terms with the Prince and Princess de Carignano, a lesser branch of the House of Savoy.³⁵ In 1751 they asked Rochford if he could secure the protection of the British minister at Vienna for a friend recently widowed there, which task he performed promptly for them, and the Rochfords plainly shared the anxiety of the royal family over the Princess's nearly fatal confinement in 1753.³⁶

The foremost social event witnessed by Rochford at Turin was undoubtedly the marriage in 1750 of the Duke of Savoy to a Spanish princess, the Infanta Maria Antonia Fernanda. No expense was spared over the celebrations at Turin on this occasion ; Rochford guessed that the looms of Paris and Lyons had been busy for months to make " a most glittering Court." The actual marriage ceremony took place at Oulx, near the French border, on 31 May 1750, but upon the grand entry of the young couple at Turin, the city

32. Eleanora Teresa (1728-81), Maria Lodovica Gabriella (1729-67), and Maria Felicita (1730-1801). Gibbon found their company just as pleasant in 1764, though by then they were sadly "trois princesses qui ont bien l'air de ne jamais changer d'etat." Gibbon's Journal from Geneva to Rome, edited G.A. Bonnard (London, 1961), p.37.

33. SP 92/58, f.171, Rochford to Bedford, 17 September 1749 ; see also Nassau Papers, D/11, Rochford to Yorke, 21 January 1750, for a similar comment.

34. SP 92/60, f.56, Rochford to Amyand, 19 January 1752.

35. The King's half-brother, Louis Victor Joseph (d.1778) had married Christina of Hesse-Rheinfeldt ; see Hoefer, Nouvelle Biographie Générale (Paris, 1853), VIII, 723.

36. Nassau Papers, D/88, Rochford to Keith, 9 October 1751 ; SP 92/61, f.154, Rochford to Holderness, 24 October 1753.

was given over to all the diversions of the Carnival.³⁷

The new Duchess was not exactly beautiful : her dark olive skin rather startled the society ladies of Turin : and though the King and the Duke of Savoy declared themselves well pleased with the match, the courtiers complained of her haughtiness. Rochford himself thought the Duchess might have been a little more gracious, but concluded ; "I own as far as I have yet observed, I don't think she carries her pride to that height people in general seem to say she does." ³⁸

The Duchess's numerous ladies were at least a welcome addition to the court, remedying the lack Rochford had noted earlier, yet when the court removed itself to the King's favourite country palace at Venaria, sometimes for weeks on end, Rochford complained that Turin became as dull as any other capital city. At one time the French ambassador had to postpone the celebrations he had planned at the birth of a new Duke of Burgundy, because there were so few ladies of quality in town. ³⁹

At such times, Rochford did not lack company, though of a rather different quality. This is revealed by an anecdote which, as it embodies what may have been a contemporary estimate of his ministry at Turin, is worth quoting in full :

[Lord Rochford] "acquitted himself entirely to the satisfaction of his royal master, and gained the confidence and esteem of his Sardinian majesty. His lordship made no inconsiderable figure among the amorous

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37. See S. Cordero di Pamparato, "Il Matrimonio del Duca Vittorio Amadeo III", Atti della R. Accademia della Scienze di Torino, XXXIII (1897-8), 98-120. The more useful of Rochford's numerous accounts are : BM Add MSS 32821, f.365, and SP 92/58, f.345, Rochford to Newcastle, 20 June 1750 ; BM Add MSS 32822, f.72, and SP 92/58, f.349, Rochford to Newcastle, 4 July 1750 ; Nassau Papers, B/21b, Rochford to Allen, 15 July 1750.
38. Nassau Papers, D/26, Rochford to Villettes, 1 July 1750.
39. Nassau Papers, D/86, Rochford to Colorado, 2 October 1751 ; *ibid.*, D/87, Rochford to Yorke, 9 October 1751.

beauties of Italy. The elegance of his person, the ease and politeness of his behaviour, the propriety of his conduct, made his fame re-echo from the charming lips of the toasts of Turin ; and his amours in that city will long remain enrolled in the annals of gallantry. As he always supported his public character with the greatest dignity, so he never let the intrigues of the man be any way blended with the business of the minister. To this cause we may ascribe the whimsical accident that befell him in that city, when repairing one night, without either servant or light, a circumstance uncommon in that capital, to one of his dulcineas, he was seized by the officers of the police, and confined till he could make known who he was, to which he was obliged to submit to obtain his liberty. His Sardinian majesty, hearing of the affair, rallied him upon it, ordering at the same time that the officers who had been guilty of the insult should make his lordship every possible submission in their power." ⁴⁰

No mention is made, in what little is known of Rochford's social life at Turin, of Mme de St Gilles, whose house was the chief rendezvous of Turin society at this time, and a centre for court intrigue. ⁴¹ Yet since she had a decided partiality for all things English and a great liking for gay company, it would have been remarkable if the Rochfords had not cultivated her close acquaintance. ⁴² In the absence of names, Mme de St Gilles's age and social eminence make her a likely recipient for a small gift obtained by Rochford from London in 1751 ; a pair of silver-framed spectacles. ⁴³

40. The Town and Country Magazine, London, II (1770), p.457.

41. Caterina Maria Teresa (d.1800), wife of Vittorio Francesco, Count of San Gillio, called St Gilles ; he was a natural son of Victor Amadeus II.

42. Lewis Dutens, Memoires of a Traveller (London, 1806), I, 248-9.

43. SP 92/90, fos.64 and 87, Charles to Payzant, 17 November 1751, and 26 January 1752.

Such gifts and favours were the accepted means of gaining and maintaining social connexions, and they were not confined to the ladies of the court : in 1751 Rochford procured from England an expensive set of mathematical instruments as a favour to the King's confessor, the Cardinal de Lances. ⁴⁴

Even from the scanty evidence available, Lord and Lady Rochford obviously did not deny themselves personal extravagances. For Lucy, there is record of several substantial purchases of silks and velvet, as well as shoes, and even eagles' down from Switzerland to pad petticoats and quilts. ⁴⁵ Apart from an expensive gold cane-head, Rochford's known extravagances tend to reflect his sporting interests : he had two thoroughbred Spanish pointers sent home to England, giving detailed instructions for their feeding and exercise en route ; he obtained a riding horse from Sardinia through the British Consul there ; and he even had a scheme to ship some roe-bucks home, for his deer-park at St Osyth, though the final outcome of this last plan is not known. ⁴⁶

Rochford also had his portrait painted at Turin, by the King of Sardinia's court painter, Domenico Dupra. ⁴⁷ The Envoy is depicted wearing a richly embroidered frock-coat and waistcoat, but the most memorable feature of the portrait is Rochford's own

44. Nassau Papers, B/33, Rochford to Birtles, 13 January 1751 ; *ibid.*, A/40, Birtles to Rochford, 10 April 1751.

45. Nassau Papers, A/6, Birtles to Rochford, 22 November 1749 ; *ibid.*, B/4, and B/51, Rochford to Birtles, 22 October 1749, and 15 September 1751 ; *ibid.*, D/43, Rochford to Villettes, 30 December 1750.

46. Nassau Papers, B/22, Rochford to Birtles, 19 July 1750 ; *ibid.*, A/59 and A/60, Birtles to Rochford, 26 February 1752, and 1 April 1752 ; *ibid.*, B/11, Rochford to Shaftoe, 24 December 1749 ; *ibid.*, B/21, Rochford to Birtles, 15 July 1750.

47. E. Bénézit, *Dictionnaire des Peintres* (Paris, 1955), III, 421, lists this among Dupra's best signed portraits. I have not succeeded in tracing the present location of the painting, though it was probably brought back to England by Rochford. Sr. Giovanni Romano, of the Galleria Sabauda, informs me it is nowhere at Turin.

air of youthful confidence, calm assurance, and kindliness.⁴⁸

Perhaps the most interesting (and expensive) of Rochford's extravagances at Turin was his second set of armorial porcelain, ordered in 1750 and delivered to Turin late in 1754.⁴⁹ Unlike the earlier set ordered for his wedding in 1742, this second set omitted the Younge arms, and the motto read very differently: "Spes durat amorum." This seems more than just a simple error, since the designs sent to China were usually copied meticulously, and it has been suggested that the alteration was Rochford's own comment on some obscure quarrel with Lucy's family, and her failure to give him an heir.⁵⁰

These and doubtless other unrecorded extravagances would normally be excused as necessary palliatives of prolonged residence in a foreign land, yet the Rochford household at Turin enjoyed a constant stream of English visitors entering Italy to commence the Grand Tour.⁵¹ The Duke of Savoy's wedding drew crowds of such travellers to Turin in the middle of 1750.⁵²

One of Rochford's earliest visitors was a personal friend, John Clavering, an officer of the Coldstream Guards, who was then

48. There is a mezzotint by R. Houston after Dupra, in the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings.

49. Cartage costs alone amounted to 365 livres; the china had to be repacked at Genoa for cartage by mule-train to Turin. Nassau Papers, B/58, Rochford to Birtles, 13 November 1754.

50. Essex Record Office, T/G, 102/29, Hills Correspondence on armorial porcelain relating to Essex families; Essex Archaeological Society Transactions, V (1873), p.48; F.W. Steer, "The Nassau Service," Essex Countryside, VIII (1960), pp.354-355.

51. D.B. Horn, Great Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1967), pp.330-332; C. Hibbert, The Grand Tour (London, 1969), and the essay by R.J. White in Silver Renaissance, edited by A. Natan (London, 1961), pp.122-141.

52. SP 92/89, f.293, Charles to Payzant, 11 July 1750, names among others the Duke of Hamilton, Lords Pulteney, Middleton, Charlemont, and Fingal, Mr Watson, and Mr Cadogan.

on his way to Rome.⁵³ Rochford also had as his guests for several months two unaccompanied ladies, a rarity on the Grand Tour, but Mrs Peters and her daughter seemed a very capable pair, as Rochford noted : "Miss is more accomplished than one generally sees young Women of her age, & talks Italian and French very well."⁵⁴ Another young visitor who had reason to be grateful for Rochford's hospitality was Viscount Stormont, later the second Earl of Mansfield, who spent some time at Turin in 1751 before commencing his own diplomatic career as Secretary to the Paris embassy, where he replaced Rochford's friend Yorke. In September 1751 Stormont wrote ; "I live constantly almost with Lord and Lady Rochford, who are more obliging than anything you can conceive."⁵⁵

A visitor of much greater importance was Prince Karl-Alexander of Brandenburg-Anspach (1736-1816), for whom Rochford secured accommodation, furniture, and domestics near the end of 1751. The Prince spent almost a year at Turin, making a close friend of the British Envoy, who later declared him "one of the most accomplished and affable Princes of this age." While Rochford earned the thanks of the Margrave for ensuring the Prince's application to his studies, he did not neglect the young man's social education, and made sure the Prince attended court balls in order to polish his dancing and his manners.⁵⁶

53. Nassau Papers, D/7, Rochford to Mann, 3 December 1749. Clavering was later the hero of Guadeloupe ; see D.N.B., IV, 460. For his fracas with a Swiss guard at Rome, see L. Lewis, Connoisseurs and Secret Agents in Eighteenth Century Rome (London, 1961), p.26.

54. Nassau Papers, D/58, Rochford to Mann, 24 March 1751.

55. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, Hastings MSS, III, 75-6, Stormont to the Earl of Huntingdon, 15 September 1751. Stormont was Ambassador at Vienna, 1763-72 ; Horn, Representatives, p.38.

56. Nassau Papers, D/96, and D/101, Rochford to Seckendorff, 24 November 1751, and 19 January 1752 ; BM Add MSS 32838, f.58, and SP 92/60, f.206, Rochford to Newcastle, 8 July 1752 ; SP 105/310, f.1, Rochford to Mann, 3 January 1753.

Tiresome though Rochford found the task of presenting at Court the sons of nobility on Grand Tour, ⁵⁷ the only one who involved him in a scandal happened to be one of his wife's relations, the son of Lucy's cousin Lord William Chetwynd. ⁵⁸ Though some of the vital details are lacking, it seems that young Chetwynd rashly promised marriage to a local girl, but was arrested when seeking a marriage licence from the Archbishop. Rochford obtained Chetwynd's release, and swiftly sent him on to Venice, paying his expenses for the journey. Rochford then successfully applied for the girl's release (it is not clear why she was put in prison), and gave her £ 50 out of his own pocket. At this there was an outcry, the town believing he ought to have given her £ 300 as a dowry, otherwise no man would marry her. Rochford wanted to give more, but doubted if Lord Chetwynd would reimburse him for any larger sum. Writing to George Selwyn, Rochford summed up his role in this affair as, "ye Instrument of putting a Stop to a little Fun that was going on." ⁵⁹

English visitors would have been welcomed by Rochford's household for their up-to-date gossip from home, and in between visitors, family correspondence would supply news of affairs in England. But for public news, Rochford relied on two main sources. He had scarcely arrived at Turin when he received a letter from one Beaufort in London, offering to supply a regular digest of European events, in French, garnered from the continental gazettes and newspapers. He had performed this service for Arthur Villettes over many years, and was anxious not to lose his regular fee.

57. BM Add MSS 32822, f.72, and SP 92/58, f.349, Rochford to Newcastle, 4 July 1750 ; Nassau Papers, D/128, Rochford to Albemarle, 30 October 1754 ; *ibid.*, D/129, Rochford to Gray, 6 November 1754.

58. For the Chetwynd relationship, see above, p.15, note 62.

59. Nassau Papers, D/55, Rochford to Lord Chetwynd, 27 February 1751 ; *ibid.*, D/56, Rochford to Selwyn, 27 February 1751.

Rochford was not greatly impressed with Beaufort's specimen digest, declaring him industrious but uncritical. Even so, this offered a convenient and useful source of information, which Rochford decided to continue, paying a small fee for the regular instalments of what Charles called "our French Novelist."⁶⁰

Rochford's other main source of public news lay in the papers he asked to be sent to him from the office of the Secretary of State in London, which included all the less bulky imprimées relating to diplomatic affairs, and two of the London papers, the Whitehall Evening Post, a respectable pro-government daily, and the Remembrancer, an independent weekly essay paper.⁶¹

However, in 1753 a copy of the London Evening Post was sent by mistake, and Rochford so liked it that he asked for it to be sent in future instead of the Whitehall. But after reading subsequent issues, and the warnings of the Under-Secretary about this prominent opposition paper, Rochford thought it wiser to return to the Whitehall, lest his visitors at Turin suspected him of opposition leanings. As Charles observed, "We have been so long from home that we know very little of the pro & con of these Productions."⁶² When the Remembrancer ceased publication, Rochford left it to the Under-Secretary to choose a suitable replacement.⁶³ His choice is not known, but Rochford's caution over such an apparently minor issue as the newspapers he was seen to receive suggests care and good sense in the novice Envoy.

60. SP 92/89, fos. 269, 270, 274, Charles to Payzant, 5 November 1749, 12 November 1749, and 17 December 1749.

61. SP 92/90, f.148, Charles to Payzant, 20 January 1753. See also T.W. Perry, Public Opinion, Propaganda, and Politics in Eighteenth England (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), pp.127-8.

62. SP 92/90, fos.155 and 158, Charles to Payzant, 15 September 1753, and 20 October 1753. See also G.A. Cranfield, "The London Evening Post, 1727-44 ; A Study in the Development of the Political Press," Historical Journal, VI (1963), pp.20-37.

63. SP 92/89, f.277, Charles to Payzant, 14cJanuary 1750 ; SP 92/90, f.158, Charles to Payzant, 20 October 1753.

Rochford was fortunate to enjoy generally good health at Turin, despite the extremes of climate and the smallpox which periodically drove the Court from the city.⁶⁴ His letters often mention heavy falls of snow and frozen rivers in winter, and once he complained of "the sudden coldness of the neighbourhood."⁶⁵ Thanks to constant outdoor exercise, riding and hunting, Rochford was only occasionally laid low by colds or rheumatism, and then from catching a chill when hot from exercise. His only serious disability at Turin was a painful "boil" on his leg, which kept him indoors for a fortnight in 1751.⁶⁶

The summers at Turin were very hot indeed, and in company with those who could afford it, Rochford took care to remove himself from the city during the dog-days. He explained his solution to James Gray : "As the Canals of Venice have drove you to Padua, the heat of this town will shortly send me to a little vigne I have taken about two miles from this place."⁶⁷ Rochford was pleased to find this rented villa, "situated so high upon the hill, that no coach can come to the door, which besides the agreeable prospect . . . also preserves me from many visitors."⁶⁸

In addition to this hill-side retreat, Rochford made trips to other places outside Turin which demonstrate his interest in the countryside around him. His earliest excursion was mainly for business rather than pleasure, though he must have enjoyed the

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- 64. SP 92/58, fos.212 and 218, Rochford to Bedford, 12 November 1749, and 19 November 1749.
 - 65. Nassau Papers, D/21, Rochford to Villettes, 16 May 1750 ; *ibid.*, D/42, Rochford to Yorke, 23 December 1750 ; *ibid.*, D/84, Rochford to Mann, 28 September 1751.
 - 66. SP 92/58, f.210, Rochford to Bedford, 5 November 1749 ; SP 92/58, f.269, Rochford to Bedford, 21 January 1750 ; Nassau Papers, D/86, Rochford to Colorado, 2 October 1751 ; SP 92/59, f.175, Rochford to Holderness, 6 October 1751.
 - 67. Nassau Papers, D/27, Rochford to Gray, 18 July 1750.
 - 68. Nassau Papers, D/29, Rochford to Yorke, 1 August 1750.

sight-seeing when he toured the foothills of the Piedmontese Alps west of Turin in 1750, to investigate the situation of the Savoyard Protestants settled in the valleys of Fenestrelle and Torre Pellice. ⁶⁹

His second excursion, with no business distractions, reflects most interestingly upon Rochford's tastes in scenery and his attitude to nature. In August 1751 he spent a fortnight in the Alps of Savoy, travelling up the Val d'Aosta to visit the Grand St Bernard and to clamber about on the glaciers. Here he collected rock crystal and vulnerary medicinal herbs, later claiming like Othello to have had "haire-breadth scapes i'th'imminent deadly breach." ⁷⁰

Many years later Rochford still confessed himself to be "excessively curious for plants," ⁷¹ and even before his expedition to the glaciers he had sent back to England two boxes of plants and seedlings which he had gathered in the countryside near Turin, perhaps at his hill-side villa. ⁷²

It was characteristic of Rochford's diligence that his own Grand Tour of Italy in 1753 coupled business with pleasure ; when he applied for leave to make the tour, it was partly in order to observe "the disposition of the several Italian courts." ⁷³ Accompanied by Secretary, Chaplain, and selected servants, Lord and Lady Rochford left Turin on 20 March after being delayed twice by heavy falls of snow. The little party travelled straight to

69. Nassau Papers, D/33, Rochford to Villettes, 25 September 1750. See below, Chapter 4, p.92.

70. Nassau Papers, D/79, Charles to Yorke, 15 August 1751 ; *ibid.*, D/81, Rochford to Yorke, 11 September 1751.

71. SP 105/285, f.83, Rochford to Mann, 2 June 1775, quoted in Lewis, Connoisseurs and Secret Agents in Eighteenth Century Rome (London, 1961), p.150.

72. Nassau Papers, B/29, Rochford to Birtles, 28 November 1750.

73. Nassau Papers, C/17, Rochford to Holderness, 18 November 1752 ; SP 92/61, f.194, Holderness to Rochford, 25 January 1753 ; Collins, Peerage of England (1779), IV, 144.

Rome : according to Rochford, "without stopping" : arriving there on 31 March. Over the next few weeks, while viewing the Eternal City, Rochford also made discreet enquiries concerning the 'court' of the Stuart Pretender, and obtained some useful information about supporters of that cause. From Rome, the Rochfords made a brief visit to Naples, then returned northwards to Florence, where they stayed a week with Sir Horace Mann before setting out for Bologna and Venice. They returned through Florence on 8 June, and finally arrived back at their house in Turin on 17 June. It was indeed a brief Tour, and Rochford complained to Holdernessee, "the very short time I staid in most of the Towns would not allow me to make any observations worth troubling your Lordship with." ⁷⁴

The reasons for such haste are not known, though they may have been financial. Nevertheless, Mann obviously found the Rochfords a refreshing change from the usual crowd of English visitors ; Lucy's wit and charm especially made an impression :

" . . Lady Rochford is extremely kind, and at the same time that my Lord and she showed me so great an instance of it by condescending to dwell under my roof, from a peculiar good and obliging disposition of mind expresses herself as if they had received and not conferred the favour. Did but the greatest part of our countrymen in some degree only resemble them, one should have the greatest satisfaction in employing one's whole time, nay, one's whole fortune, in showing attentions to them. But alas, how few one meets with like her! " ⁷⁵

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74. SP 92/61, f.43, Rochford to Holdernessee, 10 March 1753 ; SP 92/61, f.46, Rochford to Holdernessee, 17 March 1753 ; SP 92/61, f.63, Rochford to Holdernessee, Rome, 21 April 1753 ; SP 98/59, f.37, (newsletter), and f. 48, Mann to Holdernessee, 25 May 1753, cited in Walpole Correspondence (Yale,1937-), XX, 376 ; SP 92/61, f.93, Rochford to Holdernessee, 23 June 1753.
75. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports, Various Series, VI, Eyre-Matcham MSS, p.25 ; Mann to Bubb Dodington, 7 June 1753. Mann's guarded comments to Horace Walpole suggest that Lucy's beauty had suffered from the extremes of the Turin climate, and adds that she was "beyond measure dejected that she can't even confine the affections of her Lord." Mann to Walpole, 8 June 1753, Walpole Correspondence (Yale,1937-), XX, 378.

The only other extended leave which Rochford took from Turin was in the following year, 1754, when he asked to return home for three months ; "some family affairs that cannot otherwise be settled requiring my presence in England." ⁷⁶ Again his departure was delayed by heavy snowfalls, but he finally left the city on 26 March, and reached Dover exactly a month later, on 26 April. The family affairs which drew Rochford home in 1754 are not directly known, but it is likely that they concerned the sale of the Easton estate to his younger brother, Richard Savage Nassau. Richard's second child, his first son, was in fact born while Rochford was in England, on 28 June 1754. Richard may have felt he needed his own country seat now, but it is equally possible that Rochford simply needed the money. ⁷⁷

This leave gave Rochford the opportunity to bring home to St Osyth an unusual but wholly characteristic souvenir, strapped to the centre-pole of his carriage ; a Lombardy poplar sapling. He later gave several cuttings from this tree to his old school friend, H.S. Conway. Since there is no earlier recorded instance, the fourth Earl of Rochford has generally been credited with the introduction of the Lombardy poplar into England. ⁷⁸

Rochford did not return to Turin until 18 October 1754 ; ⁷⁹ the extension of a three months' leave to almost seven naturally raises the question of his willingness to return and his own estimation of his usefulness or otherwise there as Envoy.

76. BM Add MSS 32847, f.245, Rochford to Newcastle, 22 December 1753.

77. SP 92/62, f.27, Rochford to Holderness, 23 March 1754 ; SP 105/310, f.277, Charles to Mann, 3 April 1754. I was unable to see or to obtain information about the unsorted Rochford deeds in the Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office, which might yield a precise date for the transfer of Easton ; however, White's Suffolk Gazetteer (1844) suggests that the sale took place "about 1760." pp.184-5.

78. L.M. Hawkins, Memoirs, Anecdotes, etc. (London, 1824), II, 7-11 ; D.N.B., XXI, 1346 ; D.B. Horn, Great Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1967), p.332 ; Horace Walpole's Letters, edited by P. Cunningham (London, 1886), V, 272 note ; J.Y. Watson, The Tendring Hundred (Colchester, 1877), p.234.

Almost upon his arrival in 1749, Rochford heard that inactivity was the chief complaint of the other foreign ministers at Turin. He dutifully echoed this common cry in his first few months ; though, it must be added, only once thereafter.⁸⁰

Early in 1750 he observed to Mann, "as yet I see very little use the King has for a Minister here," and shortly after he wrote to Albemarle, the British Ambassador at Paris ; "if your Excellency complains of want of employment at Paris, you will easily believe that Turin must be the Idlest Court a minister can be employ'd at."⁸¹

These early impressions seem merely to reflect quiet spells, for Rochford found useful work to occupy himself, and it will be evident in succeeding chapters that he was often extremely busy when dealing with several separate matters simultaneously. At such times he was to complain rather, as he had even before the end of 1749, of "the great Hurry of business."⁸²

Rochford was not idle at Turin. However minor the task, he would devote all his energy to its execution, and he often displayed quite exceptional zeal and initiative. He once wrote to his patron, the Duke of Cumberland, "it has been my constant endeavour to make up in application what I want in ability."⁸³

Even so, it is necessary to appreciate that Rochford had very special motives for zeal and diligence in his first three years at Turin, and these are of sufficient importance to any estimate of his diplomatic apprenticeship that they warrant explanation at some length.

80. SP 92/58, f.177, Rochford to Bedford, 1 October 1749 ; Nassau Papers, D/35, Rochford to Hanbury Williams, 24 October 1750 ; *ibid.*, D/36, Rochford to Gray, 24 October 1750 ; *ibid.*, D/37, Rochford to Keene, 28 October 1750. The only later instance is in Nassau Papers, D/123, Rochford to Dayrolles, 29 July 1752.

81. Nassau Papers, D/16, Rochford to Mann, 18 March 1750 ; *ibid.*, D/28, Rochford to Albemarle, 18 July 1750.

82. Nassau Papers, B/10, Rochford to Allen, 10 December 1749.

83. Nassau Papers, D/18, Rochford to Cumberland, 2 May 1750.

Novice though he was, it cannot be held that Rochford began his diplomatic career quite at the bottom rung of the service ; Cumberland's patronage had served him well in respect of rank. When appointed to Turin, Rochford was alone in the British diplomatic service in holding the full rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. This was the highest rank possible short of Ambassador, and since at this time Britain maintained in reality only two embassies in Europe, at Paris and Madrid, Rochford stood very high in the service. In addition, his social rank as an Earl enhanced his standing even further ; apart from Rochford, there were only two other peers in the service. ⁸⁴

However, Rochford had accepted the additional rank of Minister Plenipotentiary on a secret understanding that he would be paid merely as an Envoy, and that he would rely on his own private income to make up the deficiency.

The difference in his salary was not inconsiderable. As an Envoy his salary was fixed at £5 a day, or £ 1825 yearly, whereas the title of Minister Plenipotentiary should have added a further allowance of £ 3 a day, giving an annual salary of £ 2920. ⁸⁵ In addition to this basic salary, a diplomat could

84. Albemarle at Paris and Holderness at the Hague were the other two Earls (Holderness was made Secretary of State on 18 June 1751) ; Ambassador Keene at Madrid was of humble birth and did not receive his K.B. until 1754 ; see Lodge's article on Keene in Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 4th series, XV (1932), pp.1-43. Castres at Lisbon was merely Envoy in 1749 ; Holderness, his successor Yorke, Keith at Vienna, and Hanbury Williams, were all only Ministers, though the last two were later raised to Rochford's rank. See D.B. Horn, The British Diplomatic Service, 1689-1789 (Oxford, 1961), pp.46-48, and Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, Camden Society, 3rd series, XLVI (1932), pp.20, 37, 92, 99, 107, 134, 153, 166.

85. Horn, British Diplomatic Service, pp.47-8, embodying his earlier article, "Rank and Emolument in the British Diplomatic Service, 1689-1789," in Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th series, IX (1959), pp.21-22.

claim a regular quarterly allowance for extraordinary expenses arising from postage, stationery, and intelligence. The amount varied widely according to rank and place : whilst the two ambassadors, at Paris and Madrid, could and did claim up to £ 1200 a year, the rate for Turin had long been fixed at £ 100 a quarter.⁸⁶ Since he regularly claimed this allowance in full, Rochford's commencing salary at Turin was therefore nearer £ 2225 a year.⁸⁷ Yet this was still less than two-thirds of that to which his rank entitled him.

When compared with the remainder of the British diplomatic corps, Rochford's official income at Turin was unusually small. At the top of the scale, the ambassadors received salaries and allowances amounting to between £ 6500 and £ 7500 a year in the 1750s.⁸⁸ Yorke and Hanbury Williams, at the same rank as Rochford after 1752, each received over £ 5000 a year , and even lesser ministers such as Titley, Dickens, Burrish, and Dayrolles averaged well over £ 3000 apiece.⁸⁹

It was of course a truism in the eighteenth century that diplomacy was emphatically not the career in which to make one's fortune ; indeed, some regarded an embassy as a form of indirect taxation, for the expenses of any post were likely to exceed an

86. Horn, British Diplomatic Service, pp.48-51.

87. These claims often rested unpaid for long periods ; see SP 92/58, f.370, Rochford to Bedford, 19 September 1750. An example of how the full amount of the permissible claim was contrived is available from 1751 : "For Pens, Paper, &c. £ 22-17-6 ; Postage, £ 54-19-6 ; Printed Intelligence, £ 22-3-0." Dated 28 July 1751. Autograph Series (for Holderness's signature), The Osborn Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

88. Albemarle had an enormous income from other sinecure offices, estimated by some at over £ 17,000 a year ; see Horace Walpole to Mann, 19 May 1750 O.S., Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XX, p.156.

89. Journal of the House of Commons, XXXIII, pp.471, 476 (Civil List Payments) ; see also Horn, British Diplomatic Service, p.61.

income perennially in arrears. It was left to the individual to manage his affairs so as not to overspend beyond his ultimate reimbursement from salary and allowances, or, if he could afford it, to make up the deficiency from his own private income. This was the understanding on which Rochford accepted his higher rank.

Even allowing for the fragmentary nature of our information, Rochford's private income was not large by the standards of his day. His pension as a Gentleman of the Bedchamber had risen by the 1750s to £ 1250 a year,⁹⁰ but the St Osyth estate and a few surrounding parcels of land constituted the bulk of his landed resources. Even twenty years later, the St Osyth estate brought in less than £ 5000 a year, and to judge from the estate accounts, most of this went out again in running costs, household bills, and wages for a surprisingly large body of servants, tradesmen, and labourers.⁹¹ Far from plundering it, Rochford seems rather to have nurtured his modest inheritance. But these were indeed very modest resources for a peer, especially when contrasted with the vast incomes of a Bedford or a Portland.⁹²

Though it is likely that Rochford had other sources of income which remain obscure for lack of evidence, it is surely more significant that scarcely a decade of his earldom passed without either the sale of property or further mortgages on St Osyth.⁹³

90. Journal of the House of Commons, XXXII, p.471.

91. Essex Record Office, D/DU, 268/1, St Osyth Estate General Accounts Book, 1770-83 ; D/DU, 268/2, Tenants' Ledger, 1772-95. These are the earliest surviving estate records for St Osyth. I have no information regarding income from Rochford's Dutch estates, which were yet smaller than St Osyth, and probably in the care of the van Reede family at Amerongen, his cousins by marriage.

92. See H.J. Habakkuk's chapter in The European Nobility in the Eighteenth Century, edited A. Goodwin (London, 2nd ed.1967), pp.4-7.

93. See above, p.18, note 70, and p.44, for the sales of Loughton and Easton ; for two mortgages of £ 12,000 each in 1767 and 1770, see Essex Record Office, D/DC, r.T.1.; several smaller Essex manors were sold to Rigby in 1775 ; see F.G. Emmison, Guide to the Essex Record Office (Chelmsford, 1946-8), II, pp.137, 143.

Rochford apparently inherited from his Zuylestein forebears a taste for extravagant living ; he loved horse-racing and cards, undoubtedly gambling on both, and at his death his debts necessitated yet another mortgage on the St Osyth estate.⁹⁴ Whatever his actual income, great or small, and for whatever personal weaknesses, it is beyond doubt that Rochford had difficulty maintaining his position at Turin.

The first suggestion of financial problems was perhaps his claim for travel expenses to Turin. Such a claim was most unusual, especially since this was a first appointment, for which the new Envoy would have received an equipage and outfitting grant ; unless, of course, this was waived under the secret understanding.⁹⁵ Rochford probably thought an additional claim justifiable in view of his protracted sojourn at Paris, under orders to wait for Villettes. His claim was finally granted,⁹⁶ but its exceptional nature was demonstrated when the Treasury accompanied it with a ruling that such claims would not be allowed in future, except by special direction of the King himself.⁹⁷

A second indication of Rochford's financial difficulties at Turin was his private approach to Bedford even before the end of 1749, that the secret agreement had proved to be quite unrealistic, and asking that he be paid the extra allowance as Minister Plenipotentiary. Bedford returned a frosty refusal, and warned that to persist in this would greatly displease the King.⁹⁸

94. K. Walker, "The Nassau Family of St Osyth," Essex Review (1942), 77.

95. The usual Equipage Allowance for an Envoy was £ 500 ; see Horn, British Diplomatic Service, p.53.

96. SP 92/58, f.208, Rochford to Bedford, 29 October 1749 ; the authorisation for the claim is in SP 92/89, f.271.

97. Treasury Minutes, 29/31, f.236, dated 7 November 1749 ; see Horn, British Diplomatic Service, p.51, and "Rank and Emolument in the British Diplomatic Service," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th series, IX (1959), p.29, note 2.

98. SP 92/58, f.322, Rochford to Bedford, 2 May 1750, summarizes Bedford's reply of 18 March 1750.

Rochford's situation was in fact doubly awkward. Turin was widely regarded as one of the most expensive cities of Europe at this time, yet Rochford found himself, as the representative of the Sardinian King's most faithful ally, expected to maintain an establishment and 'make a figure' at least not noticeably inferior to those of the French and Spanish ambassadors. ⁹⁹

His financial distress must have been acute for him to risk the King's displeasure : in May 1750. Rochford renewed his appeal for the additional salary of Minister Plenipotentiary, addressing himself simultaneously to Bedford, to Pelham at the Treasury, and to his patron, the Duke of Cumberland. He explained that he would not have dared renew this request "had not the circumstances of my situation here, from the excessive dearth of this place, made it impossible for me to subsist on what his Majesty is pleased to allow me." ¹⁰⁰

These letters met with no response at all. However, a further approach to Newcastle in July elicited a significant reply : though the King was "very well pleased" with Rochford's zeal and diligence at Turin, that post was not thought to be worth any extra expense for the moment. ¹⁰¹

Even in the face of these warnings and refusals, Rochford persisted. He waited almost another year, until April 1751, when he gathered his courage and wrote direct to the King himself. ¹⁰²

99. SP 92/58, f.322, Rochford to Bedford, 2 May 1750.

100. Newcastle Papers, Nottingham University Library, 900/a, Rochford to Pelham, 2 May 1750 ; Nassau Papers, D/18, Rochford to Cumberland, 2 May 1750 ; SP 92/58, f.322, Rochford to Bedford, 2 May 1750.

101. BM Add MSS 32824, f.228, Newcastle to Rochford, copy, 25 October 1750.

102. SP 92/59, f.48, Rochford to George II, 10 April 1751, Private.

This masterly supplication, dignified, restrained, and calmly reasoned, is one of the best letters Rochford ever wrote, and it had the desired effect : in 1752, Rochford began to receive his full salary as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary.¹⁰³

Yet so long as he hoped for his full salary as the solution to his financial difficulties, Rochford had a very powerful inducement for zeal and diligence beyond the call of duty. It is perhaps significant that his most intensive work at Turin falls into the earlier period, 1749 to 1752 : thereafter he felt free to take leave in 1753 and again in 1754 amounting to over nine months' absence. By 1754, Rochford was visibly impatient for either promotion at Turin or a new post.

The only other post he coveted was the ultimate pinnacle of the service, the Paris embassy. Rochford's expectations at the time of his home leave in 1754 are revealed in a letter from Mann to Horace Walpole :

"I will mention what, if it be true, you will know already, that some private informations were sent to Lord Rochford before he left Turin that Lord Albemarle was to go to Ireland, and that he might succeed as ambassador at Paris. Lord Rochford did not make any mention of it, however, in the very kind and friendly letters he wrote to me on his setting out, at which time it appeared that the height of his ambition was to return to Turin with the character of an ambassador."¹⁰⁴

Rochford returned from his leave without any increase in rank, and Albemarle did not go to Ireland. Nevertheless,

103. BM Add MSS 32737, f.550, A List of the Diplomatic Establishment, with Salaries and Allowances, 1752 ; the actual payments, which seem to include arrears, are in the Journal of the House of Commons, XXXII, 468, 475. See also, Horn, "The Cost of the Diplomatic Service, 1747-52," English Historical Review, XLIII (1928), 606-611.

104. Mann to Walpole, 29 March 1754, Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XX, 420.

Mann was certain that Rochford had been given some sort of verbal promise for Paris, which had reconciled him to remaining at Turin for a year or two more.¹⁰⁵

Therefore, when Albemarle died unexpectedly on 22 December 1754, a mere two months after Rochford's return from leave, it was to be expected that Rochford might be recalled to replace him at Paris. Rochford was indeed recalled from Turin, quite promptly, by an order which reached Turin on 18 January 1755, and he made the journey to London in record time.¹⁰⁶ But he did not replace Albemarle at Paris, nor did anyone else : the post remained vacant at the rupture of diplomatic relations in 1756 which ushered in the Seven Years' War.¹⁰⁷ Rochford filled another of the vacancies caused by Albemarle's death, and nine years were to elapse before his diplomatic apprenticeship was put to use elsewhere.

It now remains to consider that apprenticeship at Turin in more detail.

105. Mann to Walpole, 17 January 1755, Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XX, 420.

106. SP 92/63, f.1, Robinson to Rochford, 3 January 1755.

107. Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, p.21.

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The Court of Turin : Rochford as Observer

In the first half of the eighteenth century, down to the mid-1750s, Savoy-Sardinia was politically by far the most important of the Italian states in British foreign policy.¹ The House of Savoy was widely regarded as the "natural ally" in Italy for the British government, and after their accord in the Treaty of Worms (1743) with the Court of Vienna, the Sardinian King was thought of as the protégé of that which successive British ministers persisted in calling 'the Common Cause'. Yet the reasons for Britain's remarkably consistent partiality towards the Court of Turin are not immediately apparent as 'natural' ties.²

Though strong pro-British sentiment undoubtedly existed at Turin, strategic considerations counted much more heavily. So long as Britain remained at enmity with France and allied to Austria, she regarded Savoy-Sardinia in the useful dual role of an obstacle to French intervention in northern Italy, and a restraint on Austrian ambitions for complete domination there. In addition to this buffer-state role, Savoy-Sardinia's friendship offered Britain her sole excuse for a voice in the affairs of Italy.³

Furthermore, the King of Sardinia's desire for a wider corridor to the Mediterranean, partially recognized in the Treaty

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1. D.B. Horn, Great Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1967), p.335.
 2. L. Dutens, Memoirs (London, 1806), I, 170-171 ; R. Lodge, Studies in Eighteenth Century Diplomacy, 1740-1748 (London, 1930), pp.34-36, 61.
 3. Horn, Great Britain and Europe, pp.335-6 ; F. Cognasso, I Savoia nella politica Europa (Milan, 1941), pp. 235-9 ; F. Valsecchi, L'Italia nel Settecento (Milan, 1959), pp.177-180.

of Worms at the expense of Genoa's claims to Finale, held out to Britain the prospect of naval bases for a British Mediterranean fleet, conveniently close to the great French base at Toulon. British warships already regularly used the King of Sardinia's main outlet to the sea, his 'new' port at Villafranca near Nice.⁴

Rochford's appointment to Turin might well be described as the last in which this post held real importance for British foreign policy ; by his share in the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Aranjuez (1752), Rochford himself helped to curtail the strategic value of Britain's alliance with the Court of Turin. The mutual guarantees of Aranjuez, between the Courts of Madrid, Vienna, and Turin, removed much of the potential for conflict in northern Italy, and while designed to exclude French interference in Italian affairs, also effectively removed any need for British involvement. This reduction in the strategic value of Savoy-Sardinia as a buffer-state was overwhelmingly confirmed in 1756 with the reversal of alliances called the Diplomatic Revolution by which France and Austria became allies. Thus caught as if in pincers, the King of Sardinia might have been forgiven for throwing his lot in with such powerful neighbours, yet at the outbreak of the Seven Years' War he opted for neutrality and a precarious independence. This was hailed in Britain as a direct consequence of the careful preservation of friendship between the English and Sardinian crowns over preceding decades. For this preservation, Rochford deserves at least some of the credit.⁵

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4. Horn, Great Britain and Europe, p.336 ; The Cambridge Modern History, Volume VI, The Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, 1909), p.608, on Finale. Villafranca had been a 'new' port in 1670 ; V Barbour, "Consular Service in the Reign of Charles II," American Historical Review, 33 (1927-8), p.562.
 5. F. Cognasso, I Savoia nella politica Europa, pp.238-240 ; Horn, Great Britain and Europe, p.336. On the Aranjuez negotiation, see below, Chapter 6.

While Rochford's primary diplomatic role at Turin was that of an observer of the King of Sardinia's disposition and policies, his central task at all times was the preservation of a close and cordial friendship between his court and that of Turin. In the words of his Instructions, Rochford was to declare to the King of Sardinia on behalf of George II, "the great Value and Esteem We have for His Person, and how desirous We are to maintain a good Correspondence with Him, and upon all Occasions to improve it." This first clause, and the seventh, which enjoined on Rochford the duty of close observation of the Court of Turin and the influence of the various ministers on the King, together constituted the heart of Rochford's brief formal Instructions.⁶

At no time was Rochford in any serious fear that the Court of Turin would cease to pay at least lip-service to its connexion with Britain. From the very outset of his residence at Turin, Rochford was assured that the King of Sardinia regarded the close friendship of England as being so essential to his interests that no important step would ever be taken at Turin without prior consultation with the British government.⁷ At one audience, the King suggested to Rochford that Britain's friendship was his only reliable connexion.⁸ Throughout Rochford's residence, there was no lapse in the steady flow of platitudes expressing the King's firm

6. Public Record Office, FO 90/40, fos.118-121, dated 12 June 1749. The second clause concerned Rochford's visits on the royal family, and warns him to take care that he is shown all the honours due to his rank ; clauses 6 and 8 were routine, reminding Rochford to correspond with other British diplomats and to obey all further instructions from the Secretary of State. The only specific matters were those contained in clauses 3 and 4, concerning protection for Savoyard Protestants and the avoidance of conflicts between Turin and Geneva ; on these matters, see below, Chapter 4.

7. SP 92/58, f.247, Rochford to Bedford, 17 December 1749.

8. SP 92/61, f.158, Rochford to Holderness, 31 October 1753.

resolve to maintain "good correspondence and understanding."
 Scarcely a single audience passed without the repetition of this assurance.⁹

Yet on the other hand, while Rochford spoke of "so steady an Ally as the King of Sardinia," the Envoy was under no illusions regarding that ally's motivation.¹⁰ Charles Emmanuel III was notoriously the most cynical opportunist of his age in Italy, exceeded perhaps only by his father and exemplar, Victor Amadeus II. The King of Sardinia was chiefly and understandably concerned for his own preservation, and this made him a wary and unpredictable ally. Rochford soon perceived that his greatest dread was the outbreak of another war in Italy while he was still exhausted from the campaigns and expenses of the Austrian Succession War. This weakness, and his fear of antagonizing either France or Austria, largely account for his avowed policy of cautious neutrality.¹¹

The King of Sardinia was also anxious to prevent foreign influences from gaining a foothold in his own domestic counsels ; Rochford noticed that the King was "extremely jealous" of his power, avoiding any hint of favouritism towards his ministers and courtiers, and forbidding the royal family to have any part of the intrigues of the court.¹² In fact, there were few opportunities for intrigue at Turin, and none of the traditional avenues by which diplomats sought

9. For examples, see : SP 92/58, f.247, Rochford to Bedford, 17 December 1749 ; SP 92/59, f.6, Rochford to Bedford, 9 January 1750 ; *ibid*, f.158, Rochford to Holderness, 26 September 1751 ; BM Add MSS 32838, f.60, and SP 92/60, f.208, Rochford to Newcastle, 8 July 1752 ; SP 92/62, f.150, Rochford to Robinson, 26 October 1754 ; Nassau Papers, D/136, Rochford to Yorke, 8 January 1755.

10. Nassau Papers, D/47, Rochford to Albemarle, 16 January 1751 ; some years later, at Madrid, Rochford commented on the King of Sardinia as one "who is more prying into the Affairs of Italy than any other." SP 94/171, f.18, Rochford to Halifax, 8 July 1765, Separate.

11. SP 92/59, f.56, Rochford to Bedford, 8 May 1751. See also L. Dimier, *Histoire de Savoie* (Paris, 1913), p.266 ; Valsecchi, *L'Italia nel Settecento*, pp.307-315.

12. BM Add MSS 32821, f.325, and SP 92/58, f.340, Rochford to Newcastle, 13 June 1750.

to learn a few secrets ; the King of Sardinia had no favourites, no mistresses, and indeed no Queen, having remained a widower since 1741. Charles Emmanuel III led as solitary and secluded a life as his duties at court allowed. Foreign observers commented upon his natural traits of gravity and reticence having been intensified by religious devotion after the death of Elizabeth of Lorraine. ¹³

The King was daily to be seen at Mass, and regularly received the members of the diplomatic corps, but he preferred to leave business with foreign representatives as far as possible in the hands of his ministers. The King's reticence made for a very secretive atmosphere at Turin ; Rochford complained of "the Custom of this Court which seems to like making a Secret of the merest Trifles." ¹⁴

Fortunately, Rochford discovered a way to penetrate this almost oriental seclusion. The King was passionately fond of hunting, and spent as much of his time as possible at his country retreat Venaria, a few miles north-west of Turin. In the summer, the court removed itself to Venaria for weeks on end, provoking the obvious comment that hunting appeared to take precedence over business. ¹⁵ But this proved very agreeable for Rochford :

" . . as I am willing to embrace every Opportunity of paying my Court, I never fail attending him a-hunting, at which times I have the honour of Breakfasting with Him, & of being received in a particular gracious Manner." ¹⁶

13. SP 92/58, f.175, Rochford to Bedford, 24 September 1749 ; Nassau Papers, D/92, Rochford to Albemarle, 10 November 1751 ; D. Carutti, Storia del Regno di Carlo Emanuele III (Turin, 1859), II, 174-180. See also Edward Gibbon's Journal from Geneva to Rome, edited by G. Bonnard (London, 1961), p.17, note 3, quoting Keysler's Travels (1756), I, 225. I have not yet seen E. Pontieri, Carlo Emanuele III (Milan, 1935).

14. SP 92/58, f.269, Rochford to Bedford, 21 January 1750.

15. Nassau Papers, D/34, Rochford to Yorke, 24 October 1750.

16. SP 92/58, f.210, Rochford to Bedford, 5 November 1749.

Doubtless thanks to these early morning rides, Rochford managed to achieve a good personal relationship with the King of Sardinia, and at no time during his residence at Turin was he ever persona non grata to the King, as his predecessor Arthur Villettes had been on occasion.¹⁷ Even during the delicate negotiations for Aranjuez, Rochford was favoured with several informal private conversations by the King at Venaria, and while Charles Emmanuel later maintained a cautious silence on the negotiation itself during its most difficult phase, he continued to treat Rochford very affably whenever they met.¹⁸

Although Rochford's reports are, perhaps properly, bare of personal anecdotes regarding the King of Sardinia, he dutifully reported the progress of any royal illnesses, and always noted the King's visits to the spa at Vaudier, in the valley of the Stura. More than once these supposedly curative waters sent the King back to Turin more feverish and ill than when he set out.¹⁹

Rochford's observation and reports, in accordance with his Instructions, concentrated upon the King's policies and public character, and upon his ministers. Next to self-preservation and aggrandizement, Charles Emmanuel III's most obvious policy was to secure recognition as an equal from the other crowned heads of Europe. The Dukes of Savoy had held the Kingdom of Sardinia only since 1718, for which they had exchanged Sicily under the mediation of the Emperor Charles VI. The Court of Vienna had thereafter always regarded the King of Sardinia as an inferior parvenu.²⁰

17. Lodge, Studies in Eighteenth Century Diplomacy, p.50.

18. BM Add MSS 32835, f.46, and SP 92/60, f.121, Rochford to Newcastle, 15 April 1752.

19. Nassau Papers, B/21, Rochford to Birtles, 15 July 1750 ; BM Add MSS 32822, f.181, and SP 92/58, f.357, Rochford to Newcastle, 25 July 1750 ; SP 92/59, f.112, Rochford to Holderness, 21 July 1751.

20. On the King of Sardinia's foreign policy, see below, Chapter 5. Valsecchi, L'Italia nel Settecento, pp.23-7, 69-79.

Rochford heard it said that other Italian courts sneered at the King of Sardinia for "grasping at honours" when he could not grasp at territory.²¹ Yet this policy initially met with some success. Spain conceded the alternat, the customary mark of equality between powers, when signing the treaty for the marriage of the Duke of Savoy to a Spanish Infanta in 1750,²² and the Court of Turin again obtained the alternat in the Treaty of Aranjuez in 1752, from Vienna as well as Madrid.²³ At the birth of a son to the Duke and Duchess of Savoy in May 1751, the King of Sardinia obtained the Papal blessing on the child's linen, which was counted amongst Catholic courts as an important favour.²⁴

However, such a policy can also court failure, and Rochford was on hand to witness its most embarrassing reverse. Ordinarily, the Papal Nuncio at a major Catholic court was also a member of the College of Cardinals, as a mark of respect for the sovereign to whom he was sent. When the Nuncio Merlini arrived at Turin in June 1752 with the linges bénits for the infant Prince, Charles Emmanuel set about lobbying for Merlini to be made a Cardinal. This would have added greatly to the King's prestige, but the bid caused much surprise in Italy, since Turin did not even have an ambassador at Rome. For over a year, intensive efforts were exerted at Rome, yet when the list of new Cardinals was published in November 1753, Merlini's name was not included.²⁵

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21. SP 92/60, f.267, Rochford to Holderness, 16 December 1752.
22. S. Cordero di Pamparato, "Il matrimonio del duce Vittorio Amedeo III di Savoia," Atti della R. Accademia di Scienza di Torino, XXXIII (1897-8), 98-120.
23. But notice the secret reservation between Madrid and Vienna ; see below, Chapter 6, p.178.
24. BM Add MSS 32837, f.248, Rochford to Newcastle, 1 July 1752.
25. SP 92/60, f.267, Rochford to Holderness, 16 December 1752 ; SP 92/61, fos.38, 50, 182, Rochford to Holderness, 3 March, 10 October, 1 December 1753. See also, Carutti, Storia della diplomazia della corte di Savoia (Turin, 1875-80), II, 330-331.

Charles Emmanuel III regarded this reverse as a bitter personal defeat, and such demonstration of the limits to the recognition he could reasonably expect from other powers also helps to explain his adherence to the connexion with Britain. The friendship of so great a power, even though distant, Protestant, and largely maritime, gave the King of Sardinia much useful prestige in Italy. It is doubtful, however, whether the King was quite as personally devoted to the British alliance as his son and heir.

The Duke of Savoy, later Victor Amadeus III, was more openly anglophile than his father. Early in 1750, Rochford wrote effusively to friends in England that the Duke was "by far the most accomplished Prince I ever saw ; He is excessively fond of Englishmen, and everything that has connexion with England."²⁶ As a result, Rochford seems to have achieved a closer personal friendship with the Duke than with the King himself. In all their private conversations, Rochford found the Duke "always remarkably gracious" towards him.²⁷ As befitted the heir-apparent, the Duke of Savoy faithfully echoed his father's sentiments on most matters, yet despite his apparent timidity, it was not uncommon for the Duke to chat informally with Rochford on matters of policy and European affairs. Rochford's impression that the Duke was intelligent and well-informed was an accurate observation.²⁸

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26. Rochford to Mr & Mrs Parry, 21 January 1750 ; printed in Notes and Queries, 2nd series, No.4 (1856), p.71.
27. BM Add MSS 32837, f.250, and SP 92/60, f.203, Rochford to Newcastle, 1 July 1752, Separate.
28. SP 92/58, f.171, Rochford to Bedford, 17 September 1749 ; BM Add MSS 32840, f.86, and SP 92/60, f.231, Rochford to Newcastle, 9 September 1752. Gibbon also testifies to the Duke's nervousness and timidity ; Journal from Geneva to Rome, edited by G.A. Bonnard (1961), p.27. Carutti, Storia del Regno di Carlo Emanuele III (Turin, 1859), II, 180-182, describes the Duke as having received "un'accurata ed ampia istruzione," which he improved with constant study.

Secret information given to Rochford late in 1754 demonstrated the Duke's support for the British connexion : at a Council meeting to discuss the offer of a French alliance, the Duke of Savoy had staunchly defended Britain's friendship, against several doubting ministers, and had shown rather more spirit in its defence than the King himself.²⁹ It seems likely that Rochford's personal friendship had helped to strengthen this predilection.

Rochford's considerable gifts for making friends were put to good use in other directions as well at Turin, notably amongst the leading families who served the King of Sardinia as courtiers. Here Rochford made a number of very useful friendships.

Foremost among these useful friends at court was the Marquis de Breglio, or as Rochford called him, de Breille. This noble had been the Duke of Savoy's Governor until 1747, and when de Breille was promoted Grand Ecuyer in May 1750, Rochford noted that this just reward for his governorship meant that the King had now given de Breille all that he could in preferment.³⁰ De Breille was a particularly useful contact for the British Envoy. Not only was there "no one more versed in the intrigues of Court" than he, but his background made him ardently pro-British, and his advice carried weight with the King.³¹ Though no longer his Governor,

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29. SP 92/62, f.179, Rochford to Robinson, 21 December 1754. However, by 1764, Gibbon found the Duke, "à qui l'on accorde beaucoup de talens, n'est que le premier Esclave de la Cour, qu'il n'a jamais quitté un moment qu'avec son père." Journal from Geneva to Rome, edited by G.A. Bonnard (1961), p.18.
30. BM Add MSS 32821, f.77, and SP 92/58, f.326, Rochford to Newcastle, 9 May 1750.
31. BM Add MSS 32822, f.1, and SP 92/58, f.347, Rochford to Newcastle, 27 June 1750. De Breille had spent his childhood in England ; Dutens, Memoirs (1806), I, 174. Writing to Villettes in 1751, Rochford described de Breille as "my good friend." Nassau Papers, D/64, Rochford to Villettes, 17 April 1751.

de Breille was still on the best of terms with the Duke of Savoy, who went out of his way to show his continued regard.³² Rochford appears to have consulted de Breille on most matters, especially in the early years of his residence, and not only in relation to the Duke of Savoy ; de Breille was presumably Rochford's main source of information regarding the King's relationship with his chief ministers.³³

Another of Rochford's close personal friends at Court was Count Bricherasio, or Briquerasque, who was appointed Governor to the infant Duke of Chablais in 1750. This friendship proved useful for Rochford in 1752, when Bricherasio was promoted to be Governor on the Island of Sardinia. Rochford wrote to the British Consul at Cagliari, recommending the new Governor as his personal friend, who had promised Rochford to assist the Consul in every possible way to further British trading interests in Sardinia.³⁴

Count San Vittorio, the First President of the Senate, was the third of Rochford's highly-placed connexions at Court, whom he described in 1750 as "my particular friend." San Vittorio came of an old-established anglophile family in Piedmont, and his office gave him an influential voice at Turin. His advice was thought to have great weight with the King, especially in religious matters, and his support was of considerable value in one of Rochford's earliest negotiations at Turin.³⁵ Although no names

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32. BM Add MSS 32821, f.325, and SP 92/58, f.340, Rochford to Newcastle, 13 June 1750.
33. BM Add MSS 32822, f.1, and SP 92/58, f.347, Rochford to Newcastle, 27 June 1750.
34. BM Add MSS 32821, f.77, and SP 92/58, f.326, Rochford to Newcastle, 9 May 1750 ; Nassau Papers, B/53, Rochford to Shaftoe, 14 January 1752.
35. SP 92/58, fos.293 and 300, Rochford to Bedford, 28 February and 21 March 1750 ; BM Add MSS 32838, f.378, and SP 92/60, f.223, Rochford to Newcastle, 5 August 1752. On the Miners' negotiation, see below, Chapter 4.

are mentioned, San Vittorio seems the likeliest source of Rochford's secret information regarding the Council meeting late in 1754, at which the Duke of Savoy defended the British connexion ; the information came from one who was present, someone "greatly consulted" and trustworthy, who was above all "bigotted to the Common Cause" of Britain and her allies. ³⁶

Other courtiers are named in Rochford's letters who may at least be counted amongst his acquaintance at Turin, though there is no evidence of close friendship ; such would include the Marquis de la Chiusa, Grand Maitre of the King's Household ; the Marquis d'Ormea, Lord of the Bedchamber and first Ecuyer to the King ; the Marquis de Fleury ; Count Monastreul ; and others. One close friend who did not occupy a position of importance at Turin but nevertheless proved his worth later in Rochford's career was the youthful Count Roubion. Roubion was given his first diplomatic posting to Naples just before the close of Rochford's Turin ministry, and Rochford recommended him to the British Envoy there, "as he is a particular friend of mine." ³⁷ When Rochford arrived at Madrid in 1763, he found Roubion there as Sardinian ambassador. ³⁸

Rochford's genius for friendship was apparently of the sort which survives absence ; on his return from leave in 1754, he was pleased to find himself greeted with warmth and kindness by the courtiers and ministers of the King of Sardinia, "as well as some other Persons of Credit here, with whom I was in Connexion before I left." ³⁹

36. SP 92/62, f.179, Rochford to Robinson, 21 December 1754, Very Secret.

37. Nassau Papers, D/134, Rochford to Gray, 8 January 1755.

38. Rochford was overjoyed to have as his colleague at Madrid one with whom he had been "formerly very intimate" at Turin ; SP 94/166, f.25, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764.

39. SP 92/62, f.151, Rochford to Robinson, 26 October 1754.

While Rochford made useful friends amongst the courtiers, his closest and most important dealings were of course with the King of Sardinia's ministers. His primary duty of observation in this respect was clearly set out in the seventh clause of his Instructions : he was to report on

" . . the Abilities & Affections of the Ministers, their Interests, mutual Correspondence & Differences one with another, their Dispositions to War or Peace, their Inclination for Foreign Princes or States, together with all such Observations as you shall have been able to make, which may contribute to inform Us of the State of that Government." ⁴⁰

Naturally Rochford's earliest dealings were with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Ministro degli Esteri. Since the death of the elder d'Ormea in 1745, this post had been held by the Marquis de Gorzegno.

Rochford at first thought Gorzegno an honest and hard-working minister, well-disposed to the allied cause. ⁴¹ Gorzegno earned Rochford's respect at one of their earliest interviews by surprising him with a reproach that Britain had just missed an opportunity to conclude a subsidy treaty with Denmark, letting France steal a march on the allies. Rochford knew nothing of the new French treaty with Denmark, but he offered as his private opinion that a subsidy had probably been deemed a needless expense so soon after a general peace treaty. This guess was in fact perfectly accurate, and it satisfied Gorzegno. ⁴²

40. FO 90/40, fos.120-121, Rochford's Instructions, dated 12 June 1749.

41. BM Add MSS 32822, f.1, Rochford to Newcastle, 27 June 1750. Carutti, Storia del Regno di Carlo Emanuele III (1859), II, 49, describes Gorzegno as "ministro attento e laborioso."

42. SP 92/58, f.177, Rochford to Bedford, 1 October 1749. On the Danish treaty, see Horn, Great Britain and Europe, p.256.

However, Gorzegno's advanced age, his chronic illness, and the King's undisguised lack of confidence in his judgment, soon caused Rochford to look beyond Gorzegno to discern the patterns of power and royal favour amongst the other principal ministers. He quickly realized that the man to watch was the Secretary for War, Count Giovanni Battista Bogino.⁴³

Even before the end of 1749 Rochford had noted Bogino's favour with the King and his apparently unbridled ambition.⁴⁴ Continued observation convinced Rochford that Bogino aimed at complete ascendancy in the ministry ; he was doing his utmost to add Domestic and Ecclesiastical affairs to his War portfolio. He was also the closest anyone had come to being the King's favourite. Rochford noted, "that some Persons . . . who had been endeavouring to stand on their own Bottom," now paid court to Bogino.⁴⁵ It was common knowledge that virtually all of the promotions on the occasion of the Duke of Savoy's wedding in 1750 were Bogino's nominees.⁴⁶

Bogino's arrogance made him almost as many enemies as sycophants, and Gorzegno was not the least of his opponents, but Rochford took care to remain on friendly terms with both of them, and hoped nothing would alienate him from Bogino's trust ; for then, he explained, "it would not be in my power to watch him so narrowly as I can now, being at present on very good Terms with him."⁴⁷

43. On Bogino (1701-84), see the article by G. Quazza in Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani (Rome, 1960-), XI, 185.

44. SP 92/58, f.247, Rochford to Bedford, 17 December 1749.

45. SP 92/58, f.271, Rochford to Bedford, 28 January 1750.

46. Nassau Papers, D/21, Rochford to Villettes, 16 May 1750 ; BM Add MSS 32821, f.175, Rochford to Newcastle, 23 May 1750.

47. SP 92/58, f.305, Rochford to Bedford, 4 April 1750. Rochford later decided that Gorzegno had been a rather less than suitable friend to the allied cause, from his lack of credit with the King and his constant squabbles with other ministers ; SP 92/58, f.380, Rochford to Bedford, 21 November 1750.

Rochford was therefore ideally placed to witness the most significant ministerial change during his residence at Turin, the appointment in 1750 of a new *Ministro degli Esteri*. Gorzegno's age and infirmity had rendered him by March that year "a meer Cypher in his Office," and the King decided that he should be retired gracefully with the office of Grand Chamberlain, and replaced as Foreign Secretary by Giuseppe Ossorio.⁴⁸

Ossorio was a Sicilian who had won much favour under Victor Amadeus II. A career diplomat, Ossorio had served with distinction as Sardinian minister in London in the 1730s, had signed the Treaty of Worms in 1743, and assisted at the peace settlement of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. Latterly, as ambassador at Madrid, he had negotiated the treaty for the marriage of the Duke of Savoy, and had accompanied the new Duchess from Spain.⁴⁹

Rochford seems to have known Ossorio from earlier days in London, for he sent compliments to him at Madrid which Ossorio returned promptly and cordially.⁵⁰ It is obvious that Rochford regarded Ossorio's appointment as Foreign Secretary to be the best possible choice from Britain's point of view, expecting that from his long residence in England, Ossorio would have "imbibed a way of thinking not very different from ours."⁵¹ This expectation seemed to be fulfilled on Ossorio's arrival at Turin, as Rochford noted

48. SP 92/58, f.300, Rochford to Bedford, 21 March 1750.

49. Carutti, *Storia del Regno di Carlo Emanuele III* (1859), II, 49-50, describes Ossorio as "uomo per pratica delle grandi trattazioni ed eccellenza d'ingegneregnissimo dell'alto e delicato ufficio." See also, Valsecchi, *L'Italia nel Settecento*, pp.174-5, 309, and Lodge, *Studies in Eighteenth Century Diplomacy*, pp.30-79 passim.

50. Keene remarked that he was having to teach Ossorio how to play whist again, he had been so long without practice ; BM Add MSS 43424, f.56, copy, Keene to Rochford, 2 February 1750.

51. SP 92/58, f.300, Rochford to Bedford, 21 March 1750 ; *ibid.*, f.334, Rochford to Bedford, dated 6 May 1750 but corrected to June on the MS. Nassau Papers, D/27, Rochford to Gray, 18 June 1750.

that the new minister's protestations of amity for Britain were every bit as warm as could be desired.⁵²

Rochford observed that Ossorio took considerable pains in his first few weeks at Turin to establish his position at court and in the ministry. He was especially attentive to Rochford's friend de Breille, as a first step to gaining the favour of the Duke of Savoy. In the administration of his new office, Ossorio displayed exceptional industry, which "mightily pleased" the King.⁵³ With the sudden death of Gorzegno only three weeks after the arrival of his successor, Ossorio now became the chief exponent of Turin's British connexion.⁵⁴

An able and energetic new Foreign Secretary such as Ossorio also represented a serious obstacle to the ambitious plans of Count Bogino, and Rochford watched with interest the struggle for ascendancy which now developed between the two. The outcome was of considerable significance for the future policies of the Court of Turin, for while both were thought to be anti-French, Bogino's sympathies lay with Austria rather than Britain.⁵⁵

The King of Sardinia, delighted by his new minister's zeal, gave Ossorio his full confidence, and by the end of 1750 Rochford was sure that Bogino's credit had begun to slip markedly. As early as October, Rochford reported the ministry deeply divided, with Ossorio guarding his ground jealously, refusing to allow any interference in his department.⁵⁶ Throughout 1751, Bogino struggled to recover the King's favour and to undermine Ossorio's

52. BM Add MSS 32821, f.255, Rochford to Newcastle, 6 June 1750.

53. Nassau Papers, D/29, Rochford to Yorke, 1 August 1750.

54. Gorzegno died on 24 June ; Rochford had spoken to him only the night before at the opera. Nassau Papers, D/27, Rochford to Gray, 18 July 1750.

55. BM Add MSS 32829, f.149, and SP 92/59, f.124, Rochford to Holderness, 25 August 1751.

56. SP 92/58, f.378, Rochford to Newcastle, 17 October 1750 (not in BM).

position. He did so by means of an agent within Ossorio's own office, namely the permanent Under-Secretary, Raiberti. This sly man had been the means by which Bogino had known all that passed Gorzegno's hands. Ossorio's arrival had silenced him for a time, but he then revived his correspondence with Bogino. ⁵⁷

Raiberti was an able Under-Secretary, nonetheless, and Bogino used this fact to suggest to the King that he deal with Raiberti rather than Ossorio on all mundane affairs. This remarkable proposal somehow reached Ossorio's ears, but his severe treatment of Raiberti in fact only alienated his staff and other ministers. One serious consequence for the diplomatic corps was that Ossorio forbade the discussion of foreign affairs outside the Council. ⁵⁸

The crucial test of power between Ossorio and Bogino arose from a minor negotiation with the Duchy of Milan over the transport of salt on the River Po. Ossorio initially had charge of these talks, but Bogino managed to engineer their disruption, then took charge of them himself, on the grounds that the dispute was as much a domestic as a foreign matter, and that Milan's chief negotiator, Count Christiani, was an old personal friend. In August 1751, Bogino was sent to Milan to conclude the agreement, and on his return was rewarded by the King with a very ample pension. ⁵⁹

By the end of 1751 it was evident that Bogino had regained his former favour with the King, and once again held the primacy amongst his ministers. Rochford wished that Ossorio might have held such an ascendancy, thereby ensuring continued friendship

57. SP 92/59, f.45, Rochford to Bedford, 10 April 1751.

58. SP 92/59, f.199, Rochford to Holdernessee, 9 November 1751, Secret.

59. SP 92/59, f.56, Rochford to Bedford, 8 May 1751 ; Nassau Papers, D/76, Rochford to Villettes, 24 July 1751 ; SP 92/59, f.124, and BM Add MSS 32829, f.149, Rochford to Holdernessee, 25 August 1751 ; Nassau Papers, D/81, Rochford to Yorke, 11 September 1751.

with Britain as well as preventing any increase in Austrian influence at the Court of Turin. But the King's personal inclination leaned towards guarded co-operation with Vienna, as his most formidable rival in northern Italy and his closest neighbour in the Duchy of Milan. Bogino's Austrian sympathies were therefore approved by the King. On the other hand, Ossorio's suspicions of Vienna, and his close connexions with de Breille and San Vittorio, both friends to Rochford and outspokenly pro-British, may have enhanced Bogino's merit in the eyes of the King. A divided ministry enabled Charles Emmanuel to retain a firm personal control over policy and decision-making. ⁶⁰

It would have been understandable had the British Envoy taken sides with his friends at Turin, but it is to Rochford's credit that he formed a realistic appreciation of the limits to Ossorio's power and also contrived to remain friendly with Bogino. After 1751, Ossorio had to work hard to retain any influence on the Council and with the King. Though his diplomatic experience meant that his advice on foreign affairs was always valued, Ossorio had no claim to a deciding voice ; Bogino's opinions ultimately carried more weight with the King. ⁶¹ This uneasy balance of power within the ministry remained much the same when Rochford left Turin, causing him to remark upon the strange lack of harmony amongst the ministers, and between them and the King. ⁶²

60. SP 92/59, f.199, Rochford to Holderness, 9 November 1751 ; SP 92/62, f.155, Rochford to Robinson, 2 November 1754 ; Valsecchi, L'Italia nel Settecento, p.309.

61. BM Add MSS 32838, f.327, and SP 92/60, f.217, Rochford to Newcastle, 29 July 1752 ; BM Add MSS 32840, f.86, and SP 92/60, f.231, Rochford to Newcastle, 9 September 1752. Rochford's observation accords with the judgment of a modern authority on Bogino : "Alla morte del Gorzegno, il 24 giugno 1750, subentrò quale ministro degli Esteri l'abile Ossorio, ma il Bogino rimase il consigliere di maggior credito in tutte le questioni principali." G. Quazza, Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani (Rome, 1960-), XI, 185.

62. SP 92/62, f.155, Rochford to Robinson, 2 November 1754.

With the King of Sardinia's other ministers, Rochford not surprisingly had far fewer dealings, although his co-operation with the Intendant de Commerce, Count Chavannes, to foster reciprocal trade with England, is noteworthy.⁶³ Rochford seems to have had no direct dealings with the Minister for Internal Affairs, Count San Laurent, but he observed that both Bogino and San Vittorio coveted this office because of its enormous value for patronage.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Rochford gave close attention to the domestic policies of the King of Sardinia, and reported whatever seemed likely to shed light on the state of the kingdom.

Next to hunting, Charles Emmanuel's chief delight was his army. Quite apart from its vital importance for defence and as an instrument of foreign policy, the Piedmontese army provided a large part of the Duke of Savoy's training for future kingship. Fortunately, the Duke shared his father's love of the martial arts, and troop exercises afforded a frequent source of diversion for the Court and diplomatic corps at Turin.⁶⁵ The earlier part of Rochford's Turin ministry witnessed two important developments in the Piedmontese army, which he reported in detail ; the introduction of a new Regulation for dress and training on the Austrian model, and the reduction of certain regiments to a peace-time footing.

Rochford's comments on the King's attempts to introduce some degree of uniformity in his soldiers' dress are often amusing if somewhat patronizing in tone, and were obviously designed to please his own royal master, and possibly the Duke of Cumberland also.

63. See below, pp.73-4.

64. SP 92/59, f.199, Rochford to Holdernessee, 9 November 1751 ; see also Carutti, Storia del Regno di Carlo Emanuele III (1859), II, 92.

65. Usually in the Valentino Gardens ; SP 92/59, f.120, Rochford to Holdernessee, 11 August 1751 ; Nassau Papers, D/77, Rochford to Mann, 4 August 1751.

Whilst enclosing a copy of the Order restricting the expensive extravagance of the officers' dress in 1751, "as I thought His Majesty might be curious of seeing it," Rochford commented that the restriction might cripple the trade of Lyons in laces and silks.⁶⁶ He also remarked that the military parades would look much more impressive once the infantry all wore the same uniform, and though in the course of 1752 large purchases were made of muskets and Holstein horses, the uniforms took a little longer, and were not available until early in 1754.⁶⁷ Even so, Rochford saw little real improvement from the new Regulations for dress and training ; with regiments incomplete and fortress garrisons seriously undermanned, he thought the Piedmontese army was in a deplorable condition.⁶⁸

Reforms in dress and training were also accompanied by troop reductions, which Rochford interpreted as a healthy augury for peace in Italy. He suggested to Mann that from now on they might expect "more words than blows" to be exchanged,⁶⁹ and to Villettes he made this observation :

"I need not tell you that they have good Noses in this country, & that they would not be the last informed if any thing was likely to happen, nor the first to reduce their Troops at such a Crisis."⁷⁰

The reason for the troop reductions was simple and obvious ; exhausted by the last war, the finances of the kingdom were in a

66. SP 92/58, fos.282 and 285, Rochford to Bedford, 14 and 21 February 1750.

67. SP 92/60, f.94, Rochford to Holderness, 15 March 1752 ; BM Add MSS 32836, f.47, and SP 92/60, f.167, Rochford to Newcastle, 20 May 1752 ; SP 92/60, f.78, Rochford to Holderness, 23 February 1752 ; SP 92/62, fos.19 and 23, Rochford to Holderness, 2 and 13 March 1754.

68. SP 92/61, f.164, Rochford to Holderness, 6 November 1753, Separate.

69. Nassau Papers, D/64, Rochford to Villettes, 17 April 1751. See also SP 92/59, fos.20 and 38, Rochford to Bedford, 6 February and 20 March 1751 ; *ibid.*, f.67, is a table showing the reductions in each regiment.

very low condition. The King and his ministers made no secret of this fact, and it was a common topic of conversation amongst the diplomatic corps. Indeed, Rochford claims that the King mentioned his financial difficulties in almost every conversation they had together. Since this was a matter of some importance, Rochford set himself to make a special study of the King of Sardinia's financial situation. ⁷¹

His findings, impressionistic rather than statistical, were that although the King's expenses were being held in check, even his passion for building, his income was consumed almost entirely by repayments and interest on his many war loans. Rochford found that the salaries of both the army and the royal household were perennially in arrears, and that the extraordinary war taxes, long overdue for reduction or removal, had been retained at their wartime level. However, this additional revenue was being devoted entirely to a sinking fund which was designed to pay off the loans over a period of years. The King of Sardinia could not have managed without this continued high taxation ; the income from the few scraps of land he had gained at Aix-la-Chapelle did not even cover the interest payments on his war loans. ⁷²

Not surprisingly, schemes to bolster the Piedmontese economy were much in the air during Rochford's Turin residence, and in view of the kingdom's trade links with England, Rochford very properly took a close interest in commercial affairs. Quite apart from his observation of economic policy, his dealings with

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71. SP 92/61, f.148, Rochford to Holderness, 29 September 1753. Dutens points out that information regarding revenue and financial resources was the hardest secret to obtain from any state in the eighteenth century ; Memoirs (1806), I, 221.
72. BM Add MSS 32823, f.1, and SP 92/58, f.363, Rochford to Newcastle, 22 August 1750 ; SP 92/59, f.56, Rochford to Bedford, 8 May 1751 ; SP 92/61, f.148, Rochford to Holderness, 29 September 1753.

British Consuls in the ports of the King of Sardinia and elsewhere in Italy gave Rochford much additional correspondence. In fact, Rochford's protection of British trading interests constitutes a major theme of his Turin ministry.

Observation of economic policies at Turin chiefly involved the Intendant de Commerce, Count Chavannes, who was, Rochford thought, "putting every Iron in the fire to make Commerce flourish."⁷³ One of Chavannes' earliest and most logical steps was to improve the facilities at the port of Villafranca (Nice), which at this time was Piedmont's sole outlet to the Mediterranean.⁷⁴ In 1753, he also unveiled a grand scheme to establish a Chamber of Commerce at Nice, with its own special fund, to encourage trade. But Rochford's comment on this project is significant: "in the End, I dare say, this Project will fall to the ground, as well as most of their Schemes for trade, which is very little understood here."⁷⁵

There were many more examples to justify this comment. In that same month of 1753, Rochford reported the expensive failure of another scheme promoted by Chavannes, a large salt works in Savoy, which had been let out to such "ignorant undertakers" that the enterprise had collapsed with a loss to the King of over one and a half million livres.⁷⁶ Plans for a new coinage, urgently needed after wartime inflation, were sabotaged by a divided ministry,⁷⁷ but attempts to stimulate the silk industry in Piedmont suffered from sheer ignorance and prejudice. In 1752 Chavannes launched a

73. Nassau Papers, D/83, Rochford to Mann, 28 September 1751.

74. SP 92/58, f.318, Rochford to Bedford, 2 May 1750. Chavannes told Rochford privately that 300,000 livres had been set aside for Villafranca for 1752; SP 92/60, f.14, Rochford to Holdernes, 5 January 1752.

75. SP 92/61, f.140, Rochford to Holdernes, 12 September 1753. See below, Chapter 4, for Rochford's work on the Villafranca duty.

76. SP 92/61, f.148, Rochford to Holdernes, 29 September 1753.

77. SP 92/61, f.167, Rochford to Holdernes, 14 November 1753.

a new public company devoted to the silk trade ; all the leading people of Turin, including the Prince de Carignano, bought shares, and great hopes were held for early profits. But Rochford saw this as the fatal flaw in the plan ; unless some skilled managers and manufacturers were also brought in, a company consisting entirely of "men of Fashion" would be doomed from the start. ⁷⁸

Far from encouraging skilled artisans in silk, the Court of Turin actually expelled a number of Protestant settlers from the districts of St Victor and Chapitre near Geneva. This forcible expulsion of skilled silk weavers, ostensibly on religious grounds, was also designed to let the silk industry fall into native hands. But no such thing happened, for the local Savoyards lacked both skill and incentives. Rochford was amazed that the Court of Turin could be so blind to the economic consequences of an act of religious intolerance : he gloomily concluded, "Bigotry is at the bottom of it." ⁷⁹

Chavannes also had a scheme to bolster trade with Britain, by exporting Piedmontese wines to balance the importation of English woollens. Rochford thought their red wines tolerably good when allowed to stand long enough ; "in taste & Quality . . not very different from the Claret we drink." ⁸⁰ If it could be established, such a trade with Piedmont would be preferable to that with France : as one of the Consuls remarked to Rochford, "what moneys we spend in France in whatever shape is certainly furnishing arms against ourselves." ⁸¹

78. BM Add MSS 32835, f.100, Rochford to Newcastle, 22 April 1752 ; Carutti, Storia del Regno di Carlo Emanuele III (1859), II, 82.

79. SP 92/61, f.108, Rochford to Holderness, 14 July 1753.

80. SP 92/60, f.14, Rochford to Holderness, 5 January 1752 ; Nassau Papers, D/83, Rochford to Mann, 28 September 1751.

81. Nassau Papers, A/55, Allen to Rochford, 9 November 1751.

However, the first shipment of Piedmontese wines to England, which Rochford helped to organize in 1753 through the British Consul at Genoa, suffered from ignorance and inexperience. Rochford had earlier reminded the Consul that while this trade was in its infancy it had to be handled carefully ; but the same advice ought to have been given to the shippers. Out of 133 casks, the Consul found only 29 sound ones. The rest were old and rotten, some even lacking hoops, and they all leaked copiously, even the sound casks, for the Piedmontese had carefully nailed tin plates over the fermentation vents.⁸² Since no further mention of this trade appears in Rochford's surviving correspondence, it is to be hoped that Chavannes found more experienced wine shippers for the second consignment, if there was one.

It is fortunate that fresh evidence has recently been uncovered for Rochford's dealings with the British Consuls nearest to him in Italy, for the British Consular Service in the eighteenth century and relations between diplomats and consuls remain largely unexplored.⁸³ The correspondence between Rochford and certain of the Consuls adds considerably to our knowledge of his work at Turin, as is noted elsewhere.⁸⁴

Rochford's most voluminous correspondence was with the British Consul at Genoa, John Birtles, who has already found mention above as Rochford's principal agent for imported luxuries and delicacies throughout his residence at Turin : Birtles also took

82. Nassau Papers, A/80, Birtles to Rochford, 18 August 1753.

83. I refer, of course, to the Nassau Papers. The most recent work on the Consular Service, D.C.M. Platt, The Cinderella Service : British Consuls since 1825 (London, 1971), does not touch the eighteenth century, for which the best account remains the chapter in D.B.Horn's British Diplomatic Service, pp.237-258.

84. On the Villafranca duty, see below, Chapter 4, and on the Young Pretender, Chapter 5.

care of Rochford's heavy baggage on its arrival at Genoa, and saved him from having to pay any duty on it.⁸⁵ Birtles was an English merchant settled at Genoa, a trader and shipowner dealing in such diverse articles as salt from Sardinia, corn for Cadiz, herring from Yarmouth, and tobacco from America, as well as that staple English export, woollen cloth.⁸⁶

Birtles gave Rochford remarkably little trouble over strictly consular affairs. Their only serious problem concerned a scare early in 1750 when Genoa threatened to revive an ancient ten per cent duty on all vessels arriving from Villafranca. The Turin government was thoroughly alarmed and asked Rochford to furnish Birtles with arguments to combat such a step. Though two small English vessels had been induced to pay a token duty, the threatened Edict was never published, and no more was heard on the matter while Rochford was at Turin.⁸⁷ The only other consular matter from Birtles was his suggestion that Rochford should enquire about the possibility of consular salaries on the French model, but nothing became of this.⁸⁸

While Britain lacked a diplomatic representative at Genoa, the British Consul there was a vital source of information about French influence over the Republic and the activities of French troops on the Island of Corsica. Birtles's role in this respect is discussed elsewhere.⁸⁹

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85. Nassau Papers, B/1, Rochford to Birtles, 17 September 1749 ; *ibid.*, A/84, Birtles to Rochford, 9 March 1754.
86. Nassau Papers, A/73, A/28, A/83, A/58, Birtles to Rochford, 16 December 1752, 31 October 1752, 12 January 1754, 9 February 1752.
87. SP 92/58, fos.314 and 318, Rochford to Bedford, 18 April and 2 May 1750 ; Nassau Papers, B/14 and B/15, Rochford to Birtles, 17 April and 22 April 1750 ; Nassau Papers, A/16, Birtles to Rochford, 25 April 1750 ; BM Add MSS 32821, f.325, and SP 92/58, f.340, Rochford to Newcastle, 13 June 1750 ; Nassau Papers, A/19, Birtles to Rochford, 8 June 1750.
88. Nassau Papers, A/84, Birtles to Rochford, 9 March 1754.
89. See below, Chapter 5, pp.133-7.

Genoa was however considerably overshadowed by its southern rival Leghorn, which in this period held far greater importance as an entrepôt for British trade in the Mediterranean.⁹⁰ Since Leghorn was the principal port of Tuscany, the British Consul there naturally dealt with the British Minister at Florence on any commercial problems affecting British ships.⁹¹ The only known dealings Rochford had with Consul Goldsworthy at Leghorn occurred by accident, when some cases for Rochford were landed at Leghorn instead of Genoa.⁹²

Rochford had surprisingly much more correspondence with a Consul even further south than Goldsworthy, namely, William Allen at Naples. Their main topic of correspondence, next to news about the Jacobite 'court' at Rome,⁹³ was the diplomatic corps at Naples. Allen kept Rochford well-informed on this subject, giving him early advice of Castramonte's posting to Turin in 1750, and news of Rochford's Dutch friend Verelst on his visit to Naples in 1751. Allen's news of the constant throng of English tourists at Naples was on one occasion not quite so welcome, when it was Allen's sad task to relate the sudden death at Naples of Rochford's "esteem'd freind" [sic] William Powlett, who had stayed with Rochford at Turin early in 1750 and had carried a letter from Rochford to Allen only a few months before.⁹⁴

90. A.C. Wood, A History of the Levant Company (London, 1935), pp. 139-140.

91. Goldsworthy's visit to Mann in 1749 is described in Horace Walpole's Correspondence, edited by W.S. Lewis (Yale, 1937-), XX, 70, 94.

92. Nassau Papers, B/35, Rochford to Goldsworthy, 13 February 1751.

93. See below, Chapter 5, pp. 140-148.

94. Nassau Papers, A/14 and A/15, Allen to Rochford, 28 February and 14 March 1750 ; *ibid.*, B/15a, Rochford to Allen, 11 April 1750 ; *ibid.*, A/17, Allen to Rochford, 2 May 1750 ; *ibid.*, A/56, Allen to Rochford, 28 December 1751.

Rochford's most important dealings with British Consuls whilst at Turin were with those in the two main ports of the King of Sardinia, at Nice (for Villafranca), and at Cagliari on the island of Sardinia. Rochford's negotiation for the removal of a troublesome duty on British shipping at Villafranca is of sufficient interest in showing the novice diplomat at work that it is discussed separately elsewhere.⁹⁵

The British Consul at Nice in 1749 was an aged Frenchman named Bonijol, but his duties were performed by his able Vice-Consul, Louis Cabanis, with whom Rochford corresponded, in French, during his stay at Turin.⁹⁶ Bonijol died early in 1750, and almost at once Rochford received an application from a Genevan merchant at Nice, M. Delon, who sought the Consulate for his son. Delon was a friend of Rochford's predecessor at Turin, Arthur Villettes, who had offered to recommend Delon's son to the Secretary of State in London. But Rochford was highly impressed in his early dealings with Cabanis by the Vice-Consul's "great readiness & attention to business." Rochford therefore strongly recommended Cabanis as Consul.⁹⁷

Rochford's recommendation was successful, and Cabanis received his appointment before the end of 1750.⁹⁸ When offering his congratulations, Rochford reminded Cabanis to send him his Patents, to have them endorsed by the King of Sardinia.⁹⁹

95. On the Villafranca duty, see below, Chapter 4.

96. No letter from Bonijol to Rochford has yet come to light. SP 92/58, f.182, Rochford to Bedford, 15 October 1749 ; Nassau Papers, B/24 and B/46, Rochford to Cabanis, 2 October 1750, and 18 June 1751.

97. SP 92/58, fos.314 and 316, Rochford to Bedford, 18 and 25 April 1750 ; Nassau Papers, B/16, Rochford to Cabanis, 24 April 1750.

98. SP 92/58, f.391, Bedford to Rochford, 29 November 1750.

99. The Patents reached Rochford early in April 1751 ; Nassau Papers, B/34 and B/38, Rochford to Cabanis, 15 January and 2 April 1751.

The new Consul's commis or assistant was his private Secretary, one M. Martin, and when Cabanis went on leave to settle some family affairs in 1751, he left directions with Martin to report any out-of-the-ordinary occurrences direct to Rochford at Turin ; a rare example of the device of the Chargé d'Affaires at work in the Consular Service at this time. ¹⁰⁰

Outside their correspondence over the Villafranca duty, Rochford's most interesting transaction with Cabanis concerned the Consul's desire to establish his own Chapel at Nice. In response to his first enquiry on the matter, Rochford confessed that he had never before heard of an English Chapel at Nice, and declined to sanction Cabanis's plan on his own authority, promising to make further enquiries at Turin. It is noteworthy that Rochford did not think a Chapel usual for a mere Consul, in a place which did not have an English 'factory' and a large resident community of English merchants. ¹⁰¹

After two months, Rochford reported to Cabanis that he could find no precedent for an English Chapel at Nice, which meant that he would have to make a formal application to the King of Sardinia. In the meantime, however, he saw no reason to prevent Cabanis from holding services in the privacy of his own house, "pour prier dans votre famille," so long as he was prudent, "ayant l'attention de tenir vos portes fermées." ¹⁰² Official permission was finally granted, and after a formal application to the Senate at Nice, Cabanis set up his Chapel. ¹⁰³ The episode is an indication of Rochford's concern to fulfil his Instructions to protect the King of Sardinia's Protestant subjects, as well as his attention to the needs of British Consuls in Italy.

100. Nassau Papers, B/32 and B/46, Rochford to Cabanis, 8 January and 18 June 1751.

101. Nassau Papers, B/24, Rochford to Cabanis, 2 October 1750 ; see also Horn, British Diplomatic Service, pp.247-8.

102. Nassau Papers, B/34, Rochford to Cabanis, 15 January 1751.

103. Nassau Papers, B/38, Rochford to Cabanis, 2 April 1751.

The only other major port controlled by the Court of Turin was that of Cagliari on the island of Sardinia. The British Consul here, James Shaftoe, had met Rochford at Paris in 1749 on his way to Sardinia.¹⁰⁴ However, Shaftoe was to give Rochford more trouble than all his other consular correspondents put together, and moreover to test the Envoy's capacity to cope with delicate private scandal as well as commercial problems.

Their correspondence commenced on a friendly and co-operative footing. Rochford was impressed by Shaftoe's detailed reports on the disabilities under which British trade through Cagliari had suffered for lack of a Consul during the war, and he drew the attention of the ministers at Turin to the more glaring abuses, inducing them to send an order to the Viceroy to give Shaftoe every assistance.¹⁰⁵

This useful service Rochford followed up with sage advice on the conduct Shaftoe ought to observe as Consul ; he should display his monarch's Coat of Arms above his door, but take care not to offend the natives by flying the Union Jack on certain of their holy days, and at all times he should avoid making disputes out of trivial matters.¹⁰⁶ On a more personal level, Shaftoe obligingly procured a Sardinian pony at Rochford's request, but mistakenly assumed it was meant for Lady Rochford ; though it was a handsome beast, it was too small for Rochford to ride. Mrs Shaftoe's offer of some decorative shellwork at this time was, however, politely declined, Lucy being "not curious that way."¹⁰⁷

104. See above, Chapter 1, p.25.

105. SP 92/58, f.252, Rochford to Bedford, 24 December 1749 ; Nassau Papers, B/11, Rochford to Shaftoe, 24 December 1749.

106. Nassau Papers, B/19, Rochford to Shaftoe, 12 June 1750.

107. Nassau Papers, B/23, Rochford to Shaftoe, 31 July 1750.

Unhappily, these promising beginnings did not last for long. Complaints about Shaftoe's conduct began to reach Rochford in the latter part of 1750, and were confirmed by the statements of several English captains to Consul Birtles at Genoa.¹⁰⁸ By January 1751, the British Consulate at Cagliari was the focus of a public scandal.

At the time of his appointment, Shaftoe had concealed the fact that he was a Catholic. He later protested to Rochford that this made no difference to his loyalty, as he was "not a Papist . . . nor a Roman Catholick, or a French Catholick."¹⁰⁹ But Mrs Shaftoe was a Protestant, and strenuously resisted all her husband's efforts to convert her to his faith. Doubtless as a result of his fondness for the bottle, and his self-confessed fiery temper, Shaftoe resorted to violence, and was more than once discovered thrashing his wife. Mrs Shaftoe turned for solace and support to her husband's younger partner and secretary, Christopher Searle, to such a degree that Shaftoe publicly accused her of adultery. There was, in addition, an awkward complication ; Shaftoe owed Searle a substantial sum of money, from loans made before they left England, which Shaftoe now refused to repay. One witness even stated to Rochford that had it not been for Searle's assistance, Shaftoe would by now have been in an English debtors' prison instead of His Majesty's Consul-General on the island of Sardinia.¹¹⁰

108. Nassau Papers, A/35, Birtles to Rochford, 27 February 1751.

109. Nassau Papers, A/37, Shaftoe to Rochford, 21 March 1751. It is noteworthy that the Secretary of State's office knew nothing of the man, and simply appointed him on the recommendation of a group of London merchants ; SP 92/58, f.410, Aldworth to Rochford, 27 December 1750.

110. SP 92/58, f.406, Sarah Shaftoe to Rochford, 26 September 1750 ; *ibid.*, f.408, Testimonies of Captains Williams and Woodruffe ; Nassau Papers, A/29, Birtles to Rochford, 7 November 1750 ; SP 92/59, f.63, Miln to Rochford, 6 December 1750 ; SP 92/58, f.404, and Nassau Papers, D/41, Rochford to Aldworth, 19 December 1750 ; SP 92/59, f.61, Searle to Rochford, 29 March 1751.

Each of the parties involved addressed lengthy accounts to Rochford at Turin, beseeching his intervention on their behalf. But he quickly perceived that this was a very delicate affair, which could easily prejudice his position at Turin, because Shaftoe had the full support and personal friendship of the Sardinian Viceroy, a renegade Irishman who called himself Lord Roche. It was as well, therefore, that Rochford avoided taking sides, and wisely refrained from becoming deeply involved in this domestic scandal. He limited his role to that of private advice. He repeatedly admonished Shaftoe for his behaviour towards his wife, and solemnly warned him of the damage this would do to his standing as Consul, not to mention the honour of his country. To Searle, Rochford could offer little more than sympathy and counsels of caution, recommending that he seek the normal processes of English law to recover his debt from Shaftoe. Rochford's advice to Mrs Shaftoe has not yet come to light, but it probably offered sympathy and advised patient forbearance. It seems most unlikely that Rochford would have recommended the course of action she finally took ; that of running off with Searle, and sailing back to England, where he began legal proceedings to recover his debt, and she began a campaign to blacken Shaftoe's name and procure his recall in disgrace. 111

Shaftoe was not at once recalled, however ; his wife's desertion now left little doubt of her relationship with Searle. Good consuls were not easily replaced at short notice, and Shaftoe, as if to make up for his domestic scandal, now set out to be an exemplary Consul. His main task was of course to assist British

111. Nassau Papers, B/27, Rochford to Searle, 28 October 1750 ; *ibid.*, B/28, Rochford to Shaftoe, 28 October 1750 ; *ibid.*, B/30, Rochford to Birtles, 16 December 1750 ; *ibid.*, B/31, Rochford to Shaftoe, 19 December 1750 ; *ibid.*, B/35, Rochford to Searle, 13 February 1751 ; *ibid.*, B/39, Rochford to Searle, 15 April 1751.

vessels through quarantine and 'pratick', or customs formalities, and to smooth their stay by eliminating delays in loading or unloading, and by helping to arrange provisioning at reasonable prices.¹¹² These were the duties for which he could claim his consulage fees, but while he was the butt of ridicule and gossip, Shaftoe did not find it easy to obtain the co-operation of the local port officials. His connexion with the Viceroy was more of a hindrance than a help, for Roche was unpopular at Cagliari.¹¹³

In striving to show his zeal for the encouragement of British trade at Cagliari, and in the removal of genuine obstacles to that trade, Shaftoe met with "many rubs," so that his stream of detailed reports, Petitions, complaints and suggestions, addressed first to Rochford and later to the Secretary of State in London, almost buried his worthwhile work under a welter of petty gripes. Shaftoe's efforts to establish a trade in English woollens, his attempt to establish a British Vice-Consul on the island of St Pierre, and his tireless work to combat discrimination against English vessels loading salt at Cagliari, are but the three foremost of his labours, in all of which Rochford supported him to the utmost at Turin.¹¹⁴

However, Rochford's patience was worn thin many times, and he finally had to order Shaftoe to stop sending him papers of a personal nature, and to confine his reports to consular affairs.¹¹⁵

112. For details of a Consul's duties, see V. Barbour, "Consular Service in the Reign of Charles II," American Historical Review, XXXIII (1927-8), especially p.567.

113. SP 92/58, f.404, Rochford to Aldworth, 19 December 1750.

114. Nassau Papers, B/19, Rochford to Shaftoe, 12 June 1750 ; *ibid.*, A/38, Shaftoe to Rochford, 31 March 1751 ; SP 92/59, f.67, Rochford to Bedford, 22 May 1751 ; SP 92/59, f.83, Shaftoe's Petition of Grievances, n.d.(about June 1751) ; Nassau Papers, B/52, Rochford to Shaftoe, 8 October, 1751 ; SP 92/60, f.71, Shaftoe to Rochford, 16 February 1752.

115. Nassau Papers, B/43, Rochford to Shaftoe, 28 May 1751.

Rochford himself reported that he thought Shaftoe wholly unsuitable as British Consul at Cagliari, ¹¹⁶ not simply in view of the scandal, but because of his peculiarly pugnacious and impetuous manner. ¹¹⁷ Shaftoe's zeal had led him to have imprisoned an English captain, one Blacklock, on suspicion of smuggling, but when it became obvious that no case could be proven against him, Shaftoe either would not or could not obtain the wretched man's release. Rochford censured the Consul sharply over this affair, and only with difficulty finally procured orders from Turin for Blacklock's release. ¹¹⁸ In this, Rochford was largely assisted by the replacement of Roche as Viceroy in 1752 by his own friend at Court, Count Bricherasio. ¹¹⁹

Shaftoe was himself replaced early in 1754 by one Taverner, who was dismayed on arrival to find that Shaftoe had left behind him such enormous debts at Cagliari that the authorities were appropriating the consulage in order to discharge them. Rochford's loud protests at Turin soon rectified this abuse, however ; it was almost the final act of his Turin ministry. ¹²⁰ Of Shaftoe, nothing further is known.

The Shaftoe episode did nothing to enhance Rochford's standing as Envoy at Turin ; quite the reverse, in fact, for more than once Shaftoe's complaints disturbed otherwise calm periods. Nevertheless, the whole affair was a valuable experience for the novice diplomat. There was much scope for well-intentioned meddling where a domestic scandal was so inextricably entangled with

116. BM Add MSS 32840, f.186, and SP 92/60, f.237, Rochford to Newcastle, 23 September 1752.

117. SP 92/59, f.63, Miln to Rochford, 6 December 1750.

118. Nassau Papers, B/36, Rochford to Shaftoe, 1 March 1751 ; SP 92/59, f.229, Shaftoe to Rochford, 5 November 1751 ; Nassau Papers, B/53, Rochford to Shaftoe, 14 January 1752 ; BM Add MSS, 32840 f.186, and SP 92/60, f.237, Rochford to Newcastle, 23 September 1752.

119. On Bricherasio, see above, p.62.

120. SP 92/63, f.5, Rochford to Robinson, 18 January 1755.

considerations of public office, the honour of the Crown, and the interests of British trade. In his public capacity as Envoy, Rochford conducted himself with commendable prudence and caution, carefully avoiding the temptation to become involved at a personal level, or to take sides in the matter. Yet in his private advice to the individual parties, Rochford displayed much practical common sense, and revealed that he was by no means lacking in human sympathy. ¹²¹

Altogether, in his relations with the King, Court, and Ministers at Turin, and in his role as observer on behalf of British interests, it may be said that Rochford did his duty well. He exerted himself to make enduring and useful friendships at Court, and he avoided making enemies needlessly. His relations with the King and the royal family were at all times extremely affable, and the King is known to have paid tribute to Rochford's probity and discretion. As an observer of ministerial power struggles, and the domestic policies of the King of Sardinia, Rochford kept himself well-informed, and his reports suggest that he was perceptive yet cautious in his judgments. Though Rochford lamented his inability to gain the entire confidence of a monarch so wary and reticent, he had at least the consolation of knowing that no other foreign minister at Turin enjoyed greater favour or confidence at Court than he.

Having surveyed Rochford's supposedly passive role as an observer, the following three chapters examine in closer detail his active diplomacy at Turin.

121. It is my intention to prepare a more detailed study of Shaftoe's career as Consul at Cagliari 1749-54 for publication as an article.

CHAPTER 4 : Early Negotiations at Turin ; Rochford as Advocate

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Early Negotiations at Turin : Rochford as Advocate

I English Miners in Savoy.

The case of the English Mining Company in Savoy was Rochford's earliest piece of advocacy at Turin, which he claimed gave him "some employment & much trouble" in seeing it through to a satisfactory conclusion.¹ Although Rochford's formal Instructions make no mention of the Miners' case, there is clear evidence that Bedford included them in his verbal briefing, and that Arthur Villettes discussed the matter with Rochford in Paris in August 1749 ; it was the only piece of business left undecided when Villettes left Turin.²

The state of the case when Rochford took it up was that a Company of English miners had become entangled in a law-suit with local rivals in Savoy, the outcome of which gravely affected their continued operations if not their very existence.

This Company had been set up in 1738, importing equipment and skilled miners from England to develop lead and silver mines for the King of Sardinia, who granted the Company his Letters Patent in 1740 and 1741. These letters gave the English miners exclusive rights on all royal lands for forty years, together with various other privileges including safeguards designed to prevent local rivals on private lands from seducing away their skilled workmen. Unfortunately, very soon after this agreement, the War of the

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1. Nassau Papers, D/28, Rochford to Albemarle, 18 July 1750.
 2. SP 92/58, f.175, Rochford to Bedford, 24 September 1749 ; *ibid.*, f. 30, Villettes to Bedford, 9 April 1749.

Austrian Succession spread into Savoy, and from 1742 the Company's work was disrupted by the depredations of Spanish troops who plundered the mines for timber amongst other things. Even more seriously, however, many smaller mines were taken over by private local interests in defiance of the Royal Patent, and the war ended with the English Company enmeshed in a welter of law-suits.³

Many of these were petty actions, readily settled, but one proved to be rather more complicated and potentially much more serious. This case concerned a group of rich silver mines at Peyrey, on land belonging to the Marquis de St Maurice. The mines had been discovered in 1735 and developed by local contractors, the cousins Deriva, but the disruptions of the war after 1742 caused them to abandon the workings. In 1745, the Marquis signed over the rights to the English Company, which persevered under difficult circumstances and worked the mines with marked success for the next three years. The Company even paid the Marquis his seigneurial dues several years in advance, such were their profits.

Though a settlement was made with the Derivas in 1748 for their equipment and former development work, it was never effected : the cousins wanted the mines for themselves again, and had enlisted the support of Baron Chabo, a younger brother of the aged Marquis. In January 1749, Chabo procured a fresh title for the Derivas, claiming that the English Company should confine itself to royal lands. The Derivas then sued the English Company for the return of the mines, together with damages for denying them their use since the end of the war.⁴

3. SP 92/58, f.106, Memorial of Grosett and Crosby, enclosed with Bedford to Villettes, 27 February 1749.

4. SP 92/58, f.185, Relation du fait, qui s'est passé, Entre la Compagnie des Messieurs les Anglais, et Messieurs le Marquis de St Maurice, Baron Chabo son frère, et les Cousins Deriva, Pour les Miniers de Peyrey. n.d. (about September 1749)

Dubious as this stratagem^A must seem to modern eyes, it was very likely to succeed in a lower court where the Magistrates could be induced to sympathise with the Savoyard party. The English Company promptly brought an action in the same court for the Marquis to appear and testify to his 1745 agreement with the Company, which would leave the Derivas without a case. But it was essential that the two actions be heard together, and Villettes had toiled to make sure of this in the early part of 1749. He found that the ministry at Turin regarded the affair almost as a point of national honour, but despite much "cavil and chicanery", Villettes obtained a joint hearing for 4 September. Predictably, as soon as Villettes left Turin, Chabo used his influence to bring the Deriva hearing forward by itself, to 25 August. Before a sympathetic Magistrate, the Derivas won their case easily, and the English Company was ordered to surrender the mines and pay damages. ⁵.

When Rochford arrived at Turin on 9 September, he was greeted with a desperate plea from the English Company that he help them appeal against this unjust decision. It would require the intercession of the King's ministers to suspend the adverse judgment until the appeal was heard. Even though his first weeks at Turin were extremely hectic, with audiences and formal visits, Rochford set himself to master the details of the case. Once he was satisfied that their grievance was just, Rochford asked the miners for a detailed summary of their case, which he translated into French and took with him to submit to Gorzegno. ⁶

The Company had also addressed a plea to Bedford in London, who sent instructions for Rochford to support their case to the

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5. SP 92/58, f.129, Villettes to Bedford, 9 April 1749 ; *ibid.*, f.181, Rochford to Bedford, 8 October 1749.
 6. This is the Relation, cited in note 4, a copy of which accompanied SP 92/58, f.181, Rochford to Bedford, 8 October 1749.

utmost of his powers. But Rochford could make no impression on Gorzegno, and feared he had left the matter too late, for Chabo's influential friends at Court were busy trying to blacken the English Company's reputation at Turin. Rochford therefore went beyond Gorzegno, and asked for an audience with the King himself. Before the end of November, Rochford had obtained the King's suspension of the lower Court decision pending the appointment of a Royal Delegation to consider the whole dispute afresh. ⁷.

When appointed early in 1750, the Delegation proved to be grossly partisan, consisting almost entirely of Chabo's friends. Rochford quickly detected and exposed this bias, and his protest that flagrant injustice would only be repeated induced the King to appoint a new Delegation under the First President of the Senate, Count San Vittorio. If anything, the bias had now swung the other way, for San Vittorio was one of Rochford's personal friends at Court and was known for his anglophile sympathies. The King even offered Rochford free choice of the members of this second Delegation, but it says much for Rochford's modesty and shrewdness that he gracefully declined this honour, for if his nominees had returned a less than ample satisfaction, the miners would have had no chance of further redress. ⁸

Rochford was greatly relieved when the new Delegation, fairly appointed, finally prevailed on the Derivas to consent to a compromise with the English Company, on the basis of a plan proposed by San Vittorio. In September 1750, the Derivas yielded all claim to the mines in Peyrey for a cash consideration of

7. SP 92/58, fos. 218 and 220, Rochford to Bedford, 19 November and 29 November 1749.

8. SP 92/58, f.293, Rochford to Bedford, 28 February 1750.

5000 livres, but in recompense the King granted the English Company a higher price for their silver, and several additional privileges to prevent further molestation by local rivals.⁹

There the matter rested, and Rochford could regard it as successfully concluded. He told Villettes that he had taken "a great deal of pain" over this affair because he believed the miners cruelly treated, but he regretted that it may have made him "a great many enemys, especially among the Savoyards, who will I suppose look on me as their declared enemy, whereas I have really done no more than every Minister must have done who would have obeyed his Master's orders."¹⁰

Nothing more is heard of the English miners in the official correspondence until 1754, when Rochford was on leave. The Company lodged a formal complaint that some details of the 1750 agreement had not been fully implemented. The Turin ministry still had the matter under review when Rochford returned from leave, and it remained unanswered at his recall early in 1755.¹¹ The affair thus passed out of Rochford's hands, and his successor was instructed to follow it up.¹²

The case of the English Mining Company reveals Rochford as an energetic advocate, willing to master the details of a complex matter, wary of traps such as the nomination of the second Delegation, and undeterred by the risk of making local enemies; an important consideration for a novice diplomat freshly arrived at his firstpost. It is doubtful that he could have done more than he did, or done it more swiftly, and another might have been content with much less.

9. BM Add MSS 32823, f.197, Rochford to Newcastle, 12 September 1750; Nassau Papers, D/33, Rochford to Villettes, 25 September 1750.

10. Nassau Papers, D/21, Rochford to Villettes, 16 May 1750.

11. SP 92/62, fos.118, 123, 128, Charles to Robinson, 17, 24, 31 August 1754; presumably the same problem over payment of debts and arrears mentioned in Nassau Papers, D/97, Rochford to San Vittorio, 16 December 1751.

12. SP 92/63, f.51, Robinson to Bristol, 26 April 1755.

II Savoyard Protestants and Geneva

As British Envoy at Turin, Rochford had a special responsibility towards the Protestant subjects of the King of Sardinia, who had enjoyed Britain's protection earlier in the century. Rochford's Instructions on this matter were specific, and fell into two distinct parts. Firstly, he was to give his best assistance to the Vaudois and any other Protestants residing in Savoy, and prevent as far as possible any discrimination against them. Secondly, Rochford was to use his "utmost endeavours" to prevent disputes between the King of Sardinia and the Protestant city of Geneva on his north-west frontier, since George II had the interests of this city very much at heart. ¹³

There were in fact two main Protestant areas in Savoy. It is essential not to confuse the "Protestants of the Valleys" in Savoy, called the Vaudois, with the inhabitants of the Swiss canton known as the Vaud. The name has an identical origin, deriving from the medieval Waldensian heresy which was ultimately absorbed into the Swiss Reformation, but the Vaudois of Savoy lived in the foothills of the Alps west of Turin. Many had been forced to flee to Geneva by persecution in ^{the} seventeenth century, but a remnant had returned to the valleys in 1689, and thanks to British intercession had won recognition as subjects of Savoy in 1725. This agreement gave the Vaudois some liberty of worship, but it also imposed certain civil disabilities which had been a source of complaint ever since. ¹⁴

The other main Protestant area in Savoy was on the other side of the Alps, far to the north-west, in the environs of Geneva.

13. Rochford's Instructions, 12 June 1749, FO 90/40, fos.118-119.

14. See F. Venturi, "Il Piemonte dei primi decenni del Settecento nelle Relazioni del diplomatici Inglesi," Bolletino Storico-Bibliografico Sub-Alpino, LIV (1956), pages 227-271, for these earlier negotiations.

This district, known by its two main villages as St Victor and Chapitre, was established by treaties as part of Savoy, but Geneva had long claimed an ancient right of jurisdiction there, and had allowed numbers of French and Swiss Protestant refugees to settle there during the War of the Austrian Succession. Many of these settlers were skilled silk weavers, who established a thriving industry in St Victor and Chapitre, but the area was not exclusively Protestant for many Catholic Savoyards also dwelt there.¹⁵

The Vaudois of Savoy, "the Protestants of the Valleys", were in touch with Rochford soon after his arrival at Turin, for in January 1750 he reported to Bedford that he had received two appeals from their pastors to obtain permission for them to repair a church and also to seek redress for insults from their Catholic neighbours. Despite Rochford's fears of a "slow progress", he managed to settle the first matter very readily, but little could be done about the second complaint.¹⁶ Rochford therefore decided to go and see for himself what the situation of the Vaudois really was like.

He spent almost two weeks in September 1750 touring the area, speaking to many of the people and their pastors, and since his itinerary took in Fenestrelle it is clear that he penetrated deep into the valleys. Rochford was sorry to find the earlier complaints fully justified ; the Catholic neighbours of the Vaudois seemed to delight in "teazing" them with an endless succession of petty disputes and insults. It was difficult to see how such harrassment could be stopped, for Rochford had discovered strong prejudice at Turin against the Vaudois. He feared that a formal protest might only produce yet stronger resentment, and it seemed preferable to keep matters quiet in the meantime.¹⁷

15. SP 92/61, f.108, Rochford to Holdernessee, 14 July 1753 ; see also F. Valsecchi, L'Italia nel Settecento (Milan, 1959), pp.273-275.

16. SP 92/58, f.269, Rochford to Bedford, 21 January 1750.

17. Nassau Papers, D/33, Rochford to Villettes, 25 September 1750.

Unfortunately, matters did not remain quiet, and before the end of that year Rochford was obliged to make a strong protest at Turin concerning two Protestant children who had allegedly been abducted to a Catholic hospice near Pinerolo so as to change their religion. This protest elicited a lengthy reply from the Bishop of Pinerolo, who stated that the boys had come of their own accord, had twice been sent away, but had twice returned, and only then were allowed to stay lest they wandered farther afield.¹⁸

Rochford thereupon simply asked for the restitution of the children to their parents, citing an Edict of 1655 which assigned religious custody of minors to their own parents. Rochford felt that he should insist on this as a test case to give the protective Edicts a timely airing.¹⁹ However, in London, Bedford could not agree. He pointed out that Rochford's original complaint had no other support than the "bare verbal assertions" of the parents, whereas the Bishop's statement was signed by substantial witnesses, albeit Catholics. Bedford saw no need to make a fuss over a trifle, and while he fully approved Rochford's zeal, he instructed him to take no steps unless ordered to do so from London.²⁰ This was undoubtedly the wisest course ; some of the details in the Bishop's statement suggest that the two boys had simply run away from a cruel step-father.

Nevertheless, Rochford's readiness to defend the rights of the Protestants, and his energy, had made an impression. Only a few months later, the leading Pastors of the Vaudois were summoned to Pinerolo and told in the King's name that as his subjects they were

18. An undated copy of the Bishop's paper is in SP 92/58, f.415.

19. SP 92/58, f.412, Rochford to Bedford, 26 December 1750.

20. SP 92/59, f.4, Bedford to Rochford, 7 January 1751.

not to make complaints, even in matters of religion, to the representatives of any foreign power. Rochford immediately protested at Turin that this order could be interpreted as an insult to Britain's interest in the welfare of these people, but Ossorio hastened to reassure Rochford that the order was only to remind the Vaudois to apply to Turin in the first instance, and that if they felt they were denied justice, then they might apply for Britain's intercession. Rochford conveyed this explanation to the pastors, to quiet their alarm, and on this understanding matters returned to normal. Rochford had no further problems relating to the Vaudois of Savoy for the remainder of his stay at Turin.²¹

The same could not be said, however, of the second part of his Instructions concerning the Protestant subjects of the King of Sardinia. The jurisdiction of St Victor and Chapitre was an old bone of contention between Turin and Geneva. An earlier negotiation for a treaty to settle this and other outstanding issues had collapsed in 1741, and in view of Rochford's intention to visit Geneva on his way to Turin, it is reasonable to assume that this issue figured prominently in his talks with the Genevan Commissary in Paris, Mussard, in July and August 1749.²²

George II and his ministers particularly wanted to see this negotiation revived, for quite apart from any benefit for Geneva, such a treaty would remove much of the potential for French interference in Switzerland. Therefore, in June 1750, Villettes was instructed to begin sounding out the prospects for a revival

21. SP 92/59, f.52, Rochford to Bedford, 24 April 1751.

22. See above, Chapter 1, p.25.

of negotiations at Geneva, from his new post at Berne, but Rochford was to set the work in motion at Turin by endeavouring to concert a treaty project with the King of Sardinia.²³

In fact, this issue was already being considered at Turin. Count Bogino had mentioned to Rochford, without any prompting, that the King was very willing to renew the negotiation, and on better terms than before.²⁴ Rochford was startled to find that Bogino took such an interest in a matter which lay outside his own department : his suspicions were confirmed when he discovered that Bogino wanted to take charge of any Swiss negotiation as a means of enhancing his credit with the King before Ossorio had settled into his new office. Both Villettes and Rochford's friend the Marquis de Breille confirmed this suspicion, and warned Rochford that Bogino's coolness towards Geneva might well wreck the talks as in 1741. Rochford therefore suggested that the time was perhaps not quite ripe for treaty discussions.²⁵

Newcastle agreed with Rochford's judgment, probably because he would have received the same opinion from Villettes, but at the same time Newcastle emphasised that this was " a Matter of Consequence" which George II had much at heart. Though he he could defer the talks until it was certain that Ossorio would have control of them, Rochford was to keep interest in the treaty alive at Turin in the meantime.²⁶

23. BM Add MSS 32821, f.325, Rochford to Newcastle, 13 June 1750.

24. Nassau Papers, D/21, Rochford to Villettes, 16 May 1750.

25. BM Add MSS 32821, f.325, and SP 92/58, f.340, Rochford to Newcastle, 13 June 1750 ; BM Add MSS 32822, f.1, Rochford to Newcastle, 27 June 1750 ; Nassau Papers, D/26, Rochford to Villettes, 1 July 1750.

26. BM Add MSS 32822, f.30 (not in SP), Newcastle to Rochford, 2 July 1750.

Even before Newcastle's letter arrived at Turin, Rochford had broached the possibility of a negotiation with Geneva in an audience with the King of Sardinia, and found him as interested as Bogino had promised ; indeed, Rochford remarked that the King seemed to echo Bogino's very words, as if he had "borrow'd his Reasoning." ²⁷ But in a later audience, in September, the King adopted a different tone, complaining that Geneva expected him to yield a great deal, not only the jurisdiction of St Victor and Chapitre, and the district of Carouges, but also his ancient claims on Geneva itself and the Pays de Vaud near Lausanne. As the King rather testily pointed out, the city had virtually nothing to offer him in return for these large concessions. Rochford glumly foresaw that the negotiation would be complicated by such "unsurmountable Difficulties." ²⁸

But in fact, Charles Emmanuel III and his ministers were thinking in terms of a much wider project, in which Geneva could offer something useful to Turin ; namely, an alliance embracing all the Protestant Swiss Cantons. The object of this scheme was that the Cantons should guarantee Savoy against a French invasion by the threatened withdrawal of their regiments from French service if such an attack took place. Any scheme to prevent French interference in Savoy or Switzerland was sure to have British approval. However, this wider projet threw the balance of benefit into reverse ; apart from additional troops, the only inducement Turin could offer the Cantons to enter such an alliance was the settlement of outstanding differences between Turin and Geneva. Hence the King's reluctance to conclude a limited treaty with Geneva alone. ²⁹

27. BM Add MSS 32822, f.111, and SP 92/58, f.351, Rochford to Newcastle, 11 July 1750.

28. BM Add MSS 32823, f.197, and SP 92/58, f.367, Rochford to Newcastle, 12 September 1750.

29. BM Add MSS 32824, f.63, and SP 92/58, f.374, Rochford to Newcastle, 3 October 1750.

Predictably, George II and his ministers were delighted at this larger plan, and Newcastle instructed both Rochford and Villettes to pursue the possibility of an alliance embracing all the cantons.³⁰ Though the King of Sardinia was determined that the first proposals should come from the cantons, as befitted his dignity, an opportunity now arose which could lead to preliminary talks, namely, the renewal of the Capitulation for the Swiss regiment in service with the Piedmontese army. Early in November 1750 the Count de la Tour was sent from Turin to negotiate the new Capitulation at Berne, and he was instructed to welcome whatever suggestions might be made to him concerning talks for an alliance.³¹

Rochford confidently expected that these routine military arrangements would soon give way to preliminary negotiations for an alliance, for he had taken up the King of Sardinia's scheme with great enthusiasm. He was therefore puzzled and then anxious when the talks at Berne over the Capitulation dragged on for many weeks longer than expected : the King of Sardinia was not willing to increase the regiment's pay, but the Swiss would not renew the Capitulation until he did so.³²

There was however another reason for the delay. Rochford found that Villettes was being blamed at Turin for encouraging the Swiss in their obstinacy. Furthermore, Villettes had apparently ignored his instructions to pursue the wider alliance, and continued

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30. BM Add MSS 32824, f.226, Newcastle to Rochford, 25 October 1750 (not in SP) ; SP 92/58, f.391, Bedford to Rochford, 29 November 1750.
31. BM Add MSS 32824, f.255, and SP 92/58, f.385, Rochford to Newcastle, 31 October 1750 ; SP 92/58, f.376, Rochford to Bedford, 14 November 1750.
32. SP 92/58, f.400, Rochford to Bedford, 12 December 1750 ; Nassau Papers, D/43, Rochford to Villettes, 30 December 1750.

to speak in terms of a limited treaty between Turin and Geneva. The Count de la Tour blamed the slowness of his negotiation on Villettes, claiming he had "clogg'd it greatly" by his insistence on a separate Geneva settlement. Secure in the knowledge that all his steps at Turin, and his support of the scheme for a wider alliance, "have been approved at home", Rochford attempted to correct Villettes. ³³

Instead, it was Villettes who corrected Rochford. His reply convinced Rochford that he had been too ready to see the plan for an alliance solely from Turin's point of view. There were far more difficulties involved than the King of Sardinia's ministers had led Rochford to believe, but the central obstacle was that the cantons would never agree to a guarantee of Savoy against France, because they regarded the King of Sardinia as incapable of protecting them against French attack. As for Geneva, far from being willing to enter a wider alliance for the sake of settling the jurisdiction of St Victor and Chapitre, the city insisted on settling that matter first, before any other talks. Now that he could see "on what Extremes Both Parties stand", Rochford confessed himself at a loss to see how they could be reconciled ; "We must therefore patiently & attentively wait for more favorable Times." ³⁴

In the meantime, de la Tour's talks at Berne had come close to disaster. It was his very first mission, and he was made anxious by the unforeseen delays. After at last reaching a compromise agreement, he innocently allowed the inclusion of an

33. Nassau Papers, D/50, Rochford to Yorke, 23 January 1751 ; *ibid.*, D/51, Rochford to Villettes, 30 January 1751.

34. Villettes' letters are missing, but Rochford discusses his reply in detail ; Nassau Papers, D/57, Rochford to Villettes, 17 March 1751.

article he had earlier been instructed to exclude. It was only a minor point, but the King of Sardinia had wanted it to be seen as an act of grace rather than an obligation. Since the Capitulation had been signed, on terms arrived at after much hard bargaining, the King simply recalled de la Tour and let the matter rest.³⁵ The opportunity for any further talks about an alliance had been lost, but as Bedford observed to Rochford, the fact that neither side was willing to make the first move suggested that the time was not yet ripe.³⁶

The treaty initiative of 1750 therefore simply evaporated, and for more than a year nothing further was said on the matter, until in March 1752 a serious dispute flared between Geneva and Turin over the jurisdiction of St Victor and Chapitre, which made the prospect of a settlement seem more remote than ever.

In that month, the Senate of Savoy ordered all foreign Protestants living in St Victor and Chapitre to remove themselves from the district within three months, at the end of which period any still remaining would be forcibly expelled. It was thought in Geneva that the Governor of Savoy had issued this astonishing order on his own initiative, and a representative was sent to Chambéry to enquire into his reasons for issuing it. At the same time, Rochford was informed of the order by his friend Mussard, who had lately returned to Geneva from his post in Paris.³⁷

On the basis of his own Instructions to prevent disputes between Turin and Geneva, Rochford at once hinted to Ossorio that it would save everybody needless trouble if this order was quietly

35. SP 92/59, fos.28 and 38, Rochford to Bedford, 27 February and 20 March 1751.

36. SP 92/59, f.34, Bedford to Rochford, 14 March 1751.

37. BM Add MSS 32835, f.100, and SP 92/60, f.124, Rochford to Newcastle, 22 April 1752; Nassau Papers, D/111, Rochford to Mussard, 19 April 1752. SP 92/60, f.161, The Sindics of Geneva to Rochford, 28 April 1752.

allowed to drop and be forgotten, but Ossorio regretfully informed Rochford that this was not possible, as the order had come from the King himself. Rochford immediately submitted an informal note, drawing attention to Geneva's ancient claim to a shared jurisdiction over St Victor and Chapitre and appealing for compassion to be shown towards the refugees settled there. ³⁸

There was some delay before Rochford's note was answered, since the matter had to be referred to the Minister for Internal Affairs, Count San Laurent, and it was not until late in June, just one week before the evacuation order was to be enforced, that Rochford received their reply. It poured scorn on Geneva's claims, and asserted the full sovereignty of the King of Sardinia in the district of St Victor and Chapitre, citing earlier refutations of 1738. With this blunt rebuttal, a serious confrontation seemed dangerously close, and with further careful reasoning on this theme, Rochford succeeded in obtaining a two months' extension to the evacuation order. ³⁹

Newcastle commended Rochford for this initiative, and ordered him to continue with verbal representations to secure a total suspension of the order ; for the meantime, he was to avoid making any formal Demand. ⁴⁰ After an audience with the King of Sardinia on 2 August, Rochford had no illusions as to how formidable a task he faced. He was distressed to find the King

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SP 92/60, f.165, and Nassau Papers, D/113, Rochford to the Sindics of Geneva, 13 May 1752 ; BM Add MSS 32835, f.337, and SP 92/60, f.156, Rochford to Newcastle, 13 May 1752 ; Nassau Papers, D/112, Rochford to Villettes, 13 May 1752.

39. Nassau Papers, D/117, Rochford to Villettes, 14 June 1752 ; BM Add MSS 32837, f.124, and SP 92/60, f.194, Rochford to Newcastle, 24 June 1752 ; Nassau Papers, D/121, Rochford to Mussard, 24 June 1752.

40. BM Add MSS 32828, f.88, Newcastle to Rochford, 10 July 1752 (draft ; not in SP).

resolved not to concede an inch, not even out of regard for Britain's interest in the matter.⁴¹

For the next six months, Rochford laboured to obtain the desired suspension, exchanging unsigned notes and memoirs with Ossorio, and arguing the facts of the case exhaustively, but all he could succeed in obtaining were further postponements of the evacuation order.⁴² It was plain that mere verbal representations would not have any effect on the Court of Turin. Finally, in desperation, Rochford asked leave to submit a formal Demand, in the name of George II, which he submitted on 27 February 1753. This at last satisfied the King of Sardinia's sense of honour ; he had been reluctant to make any concession by himself which Geneva could claim as recognition of their pretensions. The evacuation order was suspended indefinitely, purely as a favour to George II, but the question of the jurisdiction was left untouched.⁴³

Doubtless with a sigh of relief, Rochford went off on his tour of Italy at the end of March 1753, confident that his efforts had at last secured some peace for the Protestants of St Victor and Chapitre. He had no sooner departed, than the Senate of Savoy published a Placarde in those villages which made the suspension of the original order conditional on the Protestants consigning themselves before the Magistrates on a good behaviour bond, and giving oaths of allegiance to the King of Sardinia. This was condemned in Geneva as yet another insult to their claims of

41. BM Add MSS 32838, f.378, and SP 92/60, f.223, Rochford to Newcastle, 5 August 1752.; Nassau Papers, D/125, Rochford to Villettes, 5 August 1752.

42. BM Add MSS 32840, f.246, and SP 92/60, f.241, Rochford to Newcastle, 30 September 1752 ; SP 92/61, f.13, Rochford to Holderness, 6 January 1753.

43. SP 92/61, f.38, Rochford to Holderness, 3 March 1753.

jurisdiction in that area, and when Rochford returned from leave in June he was disturbed to find the Placarde so vaguely worded that one article seemed almost to prohibit services in his own Chapel at Turin. Ossorio soon reassured him as to his Chapel, but Rochford encountered a stubborn refusal to withdraw or even amend the offending notice.⁴⁴

The city of Geneva had by this time begun to make its own representations at London through Sir Luke Schaub, the renowned British diplomat of Swiss birth, now retired.⁴⁵ He submitted three papers to the Secretary of State, calling for a stern formal Demand by Britain that the Court of Turin acknowledge Geneva's claims over St Victor and Chapitre. But George II and his ministers were reluctant to offend an ally, and Rochford was once again ordered to avoid direct demands and play for time by continued verbal appeals. Just as Rochford returned to this wearisome task, he was joined at Turin by his friend Mussard, who had been sent from Geneva to assist him.⁴⁶

Mussard's arrival barely preceded a fresh complication ; the Governor of Savoy had arrested a group of Protestants who had failed to consign themselves before the Magistrates, and they were now in prison at St Julien. Notwithstanding his recent instructions to avoid any direct demands, Rochford felt obliged to lodge a formal Protest at this violent and ill-timed proceeding in a matter which was still under discussion. But his mounting anger and frustration almost burst their bounds when Ossorio produced his rejoinder, for

44. SP 92/61, f.83, Yonge to Holdernessee, 2 June 1753 ; SP 92/61, fos. 108 and 122, Rochford to Holdernessee, 14 July and 28 July 1753.

45. On Schaub, see the D.N.B. XVII, pp.901-902.

46. SP 92/61, f.209, Holdernessee to Rochford, 11 October 1753 ; SP 92/61, f.156, Rochford to Holdernessee, 24 October 1753.

after making a detailed exposition of the whole issue, with precedents stretching back to the previous century, Ossorio claimed that Rochford had consented to the condition of the Protestants' registration with the Magistrates and the good behaviour bond. In fact, as Rochford tersely reminded the minister, he had strenuously opposed the idea, and thought he had persuaded Ossorio to drop it. Rochford's disgust is evident from his dispatches ; it is clear that short of making another formal Demand, he felt he had done all that he could. ⁴⁷

At this critical juncture, the matter passed out of Rochford's hands. The Genevan Commissary Massard quietly revealed that he had been given full powers to negotiate a definitive settlement of all the differences then obtaining between Geneva and Turin, including the dispute over St Victor and Chapitre. Now that Geneva had been seen to take the first step, the King of Sardinia readily agreed to commence talks. The negotiation was already well advanced before the end of 1753, and progressed smoothly into the new year, culminating in a definitive Treaty which was signed on 3 June 1754. The most contentious issue was settled in a secret clause : the King of Sardinia yielded his sovereignty over St Victor and Chapitre for a cash consideration of three million livres. ⁴⁸

At the time this treaty was signed, Rochford was on leave in England, and so did not witness the final solution to a problem which had given him so much anxiety and frustration. Nevertheless,

47. SP 92/61, fos. 160 and 171, Rochford to Holdernessee, 6 November and 24 November 1753.

48. SP 92/62, f.29, Rochford to Holdernessee, 23 March 1754 ; *ibid.*, f.93, Charles to Holdernessee, 8 June 1754 ; SP 92/62, f.189, Robinson to Charles, 27 June 1754 ; *ibid.*, f.107, Charles to Robinson, 13 July 1754. It would appear that D.B. Horn, in his Great Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1967), p.322, is mistaken in attributing this treaty solely to the intervention of Sir Luke Schaub.

his involvement in Turin's relations with Geneva had given him valuable experience of sustaining a mediatory role between two parties equally reluctant to give way. In the early stages, he committed the beginner's error of seeing matters solely from the point of view of the Court where he resided. But this error was excusable, since he was fully approved in the attitude he adopted, and when the facts were made plain to him by Villettes, Rochford displayed humility and good sense in admitting his error.

His undeniable zeal and energy won him a series of limited tactical successes, in repeated postponements of the evacuation order, and though he was not in a position to effect a solution single-handed, it is arguable that his strenuous championing of Geneva's case contributed to the final settlement by convincing the Swiss that they would have to make the first move, and by making Turin all the more willing to take up that offer when it finally came.

III The Villafranca Duty and Monaco

One of Rochford's most useful positive achievements at Turin, for which he deserves a large measure of personal credit, was the removal of a small but troublesome duty on English shipping at the port of Villafranca. The question of this duty arose within a few weeks of Rochford's arrival at Turin, and while it is tempting to wonder whether the Court of Turin deliberately provoked the dispute as a test of the novice British Envoy, the initial cause of complaint may well have stemmed simply from the excessive enthusiasm of the local port officials.

In September 1749, two small English vessels called at Villafranca for water and provisions, and their masters were astonished when the Receiver of Customs charged them with an ancient duty of two per cent on the value of each cargo, claiming that all vessels under 200 tons putting in merely for provisions and not to trade had always been liable for this duty. The British Consul at Nice, the aged Bonijol, was apparently content to leave the matter entirely in the hands of his able Vice-Consul, Louis Cabanis, who finally secured the vessels' release only after giving his personal security for the amount of the duty demanded. Before they sailed, the two masters joined Cabanis in addressing indignant protests to "the British Minister at Turin", not knowing whether Villettes' successor had yet arrived. They stressed that while small ships of other nations paid this duty, British vessels had always enjoyed exemption. Rochford combined his reply to Cabanis with notification of his arrival at Turin, promising to apply at once to the Ministry.⁴⁹

49. Nassau Papers, B/2, Rochford to Cabanis, 10 October 1749 ; *ibid.*, B/3, Rochford to Messrs Ferguson and Roche, 10 October 1749 ; *ibid.*, A/3, Birtles to Rochford, 18 October 1749 ; SP 92/58, f.182, Rochford to Bedford, 15 October 1749.

When Rochford applied at Turin for Cabanis to be freed from his security for the duty, he found, however, that Gorzegno upheld the decision of the port officials at Villafranca, claiming that this duty applied to all nations without exception. Gorzegno insisted that if on occasion the duty had not been asked of British vessels in the past, this was no precedent to claim exemption now. He added that he was sure British ships had paid the duty regularly before the war, and promised Rochford a paper setting out the facts of the case in detail. In the meantime, since he knew little of the matter himself, Rochford wisely decided not to make a fuss until he had further advice from London. ⁵⁰

At this point, the question of the duty at Villafranca was suddenly overshadowed by an incident involving one of the very same vessels which Cabanis had managed to get clear of Villafranca. Thomas Ferguson in the "Sea Flower", continuing his voyage to Genoa, had been intercepted on the night of 8 or 9 October by a cruising sloop from the principality of Monaco, and forced to stop after being repeatedly fired upon and sustaining several casualties. Under guise of searching the vessel, the Monacans began to plunder, and when challenged, threw the goods into the sea. Ferguson asked the sloop-commander whether Monaco had declared war on England, that they could rob vessels on the open sea, but Ughet merely retorted that he had orders to inspect any sort of vessel in these waters. On seeing Ferguson's Admiralty Pass and British flag, however, Ughet beat a rapid retreat. When daylight dawned, Ferguson found that much of his rigging had been shot away, and it was only with some difficulty that he managed to reach Genoa, where he reported the

50. SP 92/58, f.182, Rochford to Bedford, 15 October 1749.

affray to the British Consul, John Birtles. Protesting in turn to Rochford, Birtles urged that he demand a "proper Satisfaction" from Monaco, "for if such Proceedings are not put a Stop to, it will not be possible for small vessels to navigate into these Parts." ⁵¹

Unlike Villafranca and Nice, which were part of Savoy and ruled by a Senate at Nice directly responsible to Turin, Monaco was an independent principality and a centre of strong French influence, as indicated by its French garrison. Both Monaco and Villafranca claimed the ancient two per cent duty on smaller vessels (originally in medieval times a Papal measure to help combat Barbary pirates), but Monaco was much more active in its enforcement, even to maintaining an off-shore patrol. It was this patrolling sloop which had fallen upon Ferguson. British vessels preferred to use Villafranca, but were usually allowed to pass Monaco unhindered. ⁵²

Rochford's indignant letter of protest to the Governor of Monaco swiftly led to the imprisonment of the offending sloop-commander, but the Prince of Monaco himself was then in Paris, so Rochford also sent a detailed account of the incident to the British Ambassador there, Lord Albemarle. The Prince declared himself horrified at the insult shown to an English vessel in time of peace, and after a series of conversations with Albemarle, issued a letter disavowing Ughet's action. Consul Birtles declared this satisfaction "as good a Conclusion as could be desired." ⁵³

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51. Nassau Papers, A/3, Birtles to Rochford, 18 October 1749 ; *ibid.*, D/4, and SP 92/58, f.202, Rochford to Grimaldi, 22 October 1749.
 52. SP 92/58, fos.200 and 271, Rochford to Bedford, 22 October 1749, and 28 January 1750.
 53. SP 92/58, f.214, Grimaldi to Rochford, 29 October 1749 (copy) ; Nassau Papers, D/3 and D/5, Rochford to Albemarle, 22 October and 8 November 1749 ; SP 92/58, fos. 212 and 242, Rochford to Bedford, 12 November and 10 December 1749 ; SP 92/58, f.216, Bedford to Rochford, 16 November 1749 ; Nassau Papers, A/7, Birtles to Rochford, 6 December 1749.

While the ripples set in motion by the Monaco incident were gradually dying away, Rochford found the Court of Turin determined not to acknowledge any exemption from the Villafranca duty for English vessels. He soon discovered the reason for this determination. French shipping made far greater use of Villafranca than the British, and since 1726 France had paid a regular abonnement of 40,000 livres a year to be free of this duty. The agreement was due for revision, and the Court of Turin rightly feared that any concessions made openly to Britain would give the French pretext to drive a harder bargain.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, Rochford was privately confident that Turin meant well to Britain on this issue, and that the port officials at Villafranca would be told to take no notice of English vessels for the future. This surmise seemed confirmed in November 1749, when Rochford heard that Gorzegno had rebuked the Intendant at Nice and the Governor of Villafranca for not having restrained their underlings' misplaced zeal in the first place. Stronger proof was that another English vessel calling at Villafranca on its way to Leghorn was not called upon to pay the duty.⁵⁵

In addition, Gorzegno was taking a long while to prepare his promised paper setting out the detailed history of the Villafranca duty with evidence of British payment in the past ; Rochford loftily observed, "I apprehend this Tardiness arises in some Measure from the Difficulty of finding Instances."⁵⁶

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- 54. Nassau Papers, B/4, Rochford to Birtles, 22 October 1749 ; SP 92/58, f.206, Rochford to Bedford, 29 October 1749.
 - 55. SP 92/58, f.218, Rochford to Bedford, 19 November 1749 ; Nassau Papers, B/5, Rochford to Cabanis, 7 November 1749.
 - 56. SP 92/58, f.206, Rochford to Bedford, 29 October 1749.

Gorzegno finally produced his paper on the Villafranca duty on the very same day that Rochford received instructions from Bedford to seek a complete exemption from the duty for all English vessels.⁵⁷ Much of Gorzegno's Memoire was given over to establishing a respectable pedigree for the Villafranca duty, going beyond its confirmation in major treaties such as those of Turin (1696) and Utrecht (1713) as far back as an agreement by Charles of Anjou in 1262. While it was admitted that France was the only nation mentioned by those treaties in relation to the duty, Gorzegno stressed that the duty had always applied to all nations without exception, and cited the Registers of the Port of Villafranca for examples of payment by English vessels between 1683 and 1733. The two most recent cases in which English masters successfully applied for release from the duty, in 1729 and 1730, were declared to be anomalous and not to be taken as a precedent, because the decisions were made by the individual who then held the farm of the duty.⁵⁸

Rochford argued in reply, using information supplied by Consul Birtles from Genoa, that the two examples of 1729 and 1730 in fact proved the British exemption, and that earlier cases of English payment had been allowed by consuls who were foreigners, ignorant of this exemption and fearful of causing any dispute.⁵⁹ Rochford sent a copy of Gorzegno's Memoire to Consul Cabanis at Nice for his comments, and redoubled his verbal persuasions that

57. SP 92/58, f.204, Bedford to Rochford, 26 October 1749.

58. SP 92/58, f.223, "Mémoire sur le Droit de Passage de Villefranche," undated, delivered to Rochford on 29 November 1749.

59. Nassau Papers, A/3, Birtles to Rochford, 18 October 1749 ; SP 92/58, f.220, Rochford to Bedford, 29 November 1749.

the duty be waived altogether. At the same time, Rochford was pressing that Consul Cabanis be spared the security he had pledged for the two English vessels in September. Gorzegno finally assured Rochford that his Court had no wish to offend Britain, and as proof of their goodwill would make no use of the Consul's security ; but he also made it plain that they must at least appear to insist, in case France sought to escape the duty as well. Presumably for this reason, Gorzegno was reluctant to treat the matter at Turin, though Rochford repeatedly offered to do so, and a copy of the Memoire was sent to the Sardinian Envoy in London, Count Perron, to submit direct to Bedford. However, Bedford simply sent it on to the Board of Trade for its comment, and there the matter rested for many months.⁶⁰

While the question of the Villafranca duty was thus safely disposed of for the time being, the reverse was true of the similar duty claimed by Monaco. Probably as a result of the humiliating affair in September, Monaco now applied the duty with full rigour to any British vessels unfortunate enough to call there. The first of many such instances occurred in January 1750 when a small sloop from Port Mahon was forced in at Monaco by bad weather. When Rochford protested, Governor Grimaldi replied that they had always regarded vessels from Gibraltar and Port Mahon as being on the same footing as Spanish vessels in regard of this duty, and enclosed a copy of a letter dated 1717 as evidence.⁶¹

60. SP 92/58, f.254, Rochford to Bedford, 31 December 1749 ; Nassau Papers, B/8, Rochford to Cabanis, 5 December 1749 ; SP 92/58, f.256, Bedford to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 5 January 1750.

61. SP 92/58, f.276, Grimaldi to Rochford, 18 January 1750.

Though Grimaldi let the vessel sail the very next day, after the master had offered to leave part of his cargo as security for the amount of the duty claimed,⁶² Rochford did not let the matter rest there. After writing a hurried enquiry to General Blakeney, the Governor of Minorca, to find out whether Port Mahon vessels had ever paid this duty at Monaco,⁶³ Rochford penned a masterly rejoinder to Grimaldi. Politely but firmly, he pointed out that the letter of 1717 adduced as evidence of earlier liability itself demonstrated that the matter was then hotly in dispute and far from settled. So long as a vessel carried an Admiralty Pass for the Mediterranean, and a British flag, it ought to be treated as an English vessel whatever its port of origin. While thanking Grimaldi for the moderation he had shown, Rochford left no doubt that he believed the Prince of Monaco had as little right to impose this duty on English vessels as had the King of Sardinia at Villafranca. He would, however, await further instructions from London.⁶⁴

In this expectation, Rochford was to be disappointed, for Bedford made no specific reply on the duty at Monaco, assuming (wrongly) that it was part of the Villafranca duty already under consideration. He merely commended Rochford for his efforts so far, adding that he still awaited the report of the Board of Trade.⁶⁵

62. SP 92/58, f.277, Grimaldi to Rochford, 19 January 1750.

63. Nassau Papers, D/13, Rochford to Blakeney, 24 January 1750.

64. Nassau Papers, D/14, and Sp 92/58, f.278, Rochford to Grimaldi, 28 January 1750 ; SP 92/58, f.271, Rochford to Bedford, 28 January 1750.

65. SP 92/58, f.262, Bedford to Rochford, 11 January 1750, O.S.

As Gorzegno feared, Rochford's activity regarding the duties at Villafranca and at Monaco had not gone unnoticed by another interested party. In March 1750, Chetardie, the French Ambassador at Turin, hinted privately to Rochford that France was now inclined to dispute this matter, notwithstanding the treaties which bound them to pay it, in the hope of bargaining for a more permanent solution than the old annual Abonnement.⁶⁶ Rochford ached with impatience to answer Gorzegno's Memoire on the Villafranca duty, and had again asked Bedford if he could treat the matter at Turin, but this appeal met with no response.⁶⁷

The Board of Trade in London, though maddeningly slow, was not wholly idle, and managed to interview six masters of vessels which had traded in and out of Villafranca in recent years without being asked to pay any such duty.⁶⁸ Yet the Board still complained that it lacked information, and appealed to Consul Cabanis at Nice through his friend and London partner, Jean Chamier. Cabanis replied in May 1750, and added reassurances for the London merchants that it was still safe to consign their cargoes through Villafranca : since Rochford's energetic representations at Turin, there had been several British vessels in port which he had had no difficulty in getting exempted from this duty.⁶⁹

Once again, while matters remained quiet at Villafranca, difficulties were being encountered at Monaco, where a succession of small vessels from Gibraltar and Port Mahon were being detained

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66. SP 92/58, f.303, Rochford to Aldworth (Bedford's Under-Secretary), 28 March 1750 ; draft in Nassau Papers, D/17.
67. SP 92/50, f.280, Rochford to Bedford, 4 February 1750.
68. SP 92/58, f.311, Lords of Trade and Plantations to Bedford, 12 April 1750.
69. SP 92/58, f.336, Cabanis to Chamier (copy), 16 May 1750 ; SP 92/59, f.14, undated office memo on the Villafranca Duty (internal evidence suggests June 1750).

and compelled to pay the two per cent duty : Rochford was becoming tired of making the same complaints with no apparent effect. ⁷⁰ His frustration spilled over in a letter to Albemarle ;

" . perhaps it may not be looked upon in England as a thing of any consequence, but I own I cant see it in that Light, for the great trade we have in the Mediterranean can but suffer very much & our honour a great deal more from permitting every little Principality to oblige us to submit to customs of their own establishing & which I am positive we have never allowed to be their right." ⁷¹

So long as the Court of Turin insisted on the duty at Villafranca, Monaco would also insist on their duty for all English vessels.

At this point, in the middle of 1750, Gorzegno's successor Ossorio suggested to Rochford that Britain should follow France's example and compound her liability for this duty under a lump sum or annual Abonnement. While Rochford was quick to remind Ossorio that Britain's liability was as yet far from proven, in his own report to Newcastle, Rochford urged this as the simplest and most effective way to be rid of the nuisance, saving further needless dispute and ill-feeling at Turin. Knowing the reluctance of the Court of Turin to give France any pretext to escape the duty, Rochford suggested that if Britain offered her settlement as a favour for an ally against France, then Turin would be glad to settle for "a meer Trifle." ⁷²

70. Nassau Papers, A/20, Birtles to Rochford, 27 June 1750 ; BM Add MSS 32822, f.111, Rochford to Newcastle, 11 July 1750 ; Nassau Papers, B/24, Rochford to Cabanis, 2 October 1750.

71. Nassau Papers, D/28, Rochford to Albemarle, 18 July 1750.

72. BM Add MSS 32822, f.181, Rochford to Newcastle, 25 July 1750 ; SP 92/58, f.357 (copy) ; as early as October 1749 Rochford had suggested this solution if it were found that Britain was in fact liable for the duty ; see SP 92/58, f.206, Rochford to Bedford, 29 October 1749.

Again, there was no response from either Bedford or Newcastle to Rochford's suggestion, and the situation remained unchanged for no less than a year : still with no answer from the Board of Trade, and with Monaco continuing to "harass and torment" whatever smaller vessels from Gibraltar or Port Mahon unlucky enough to call there. One such instance in June 1751 prompted Rochford to remind Bedford that the Villafranca affair itself remained unresolved, but he met with no response or even acknowledgment from London, and yet another year wound slowly by.⁷³

Finally, this period of relative quiet was interrupted by a revival of the earlier insistence on the duty at Villafranca. Since the episode in September 1749, Consul Cabanis had been able to obtain ready clearance for English vessels, with no mention of the duty, but in September 1752 the port officials once again insisted, and Cabanis had to pledge his personal security to enable a British ship to proceed to Leghorn. Rochford at once submitted a note to Ossorio, reminding him that the matter was still under consideration in London, and demanded that Cabanis be released from his obligation immediately. Rochford had also done some reading on the whole subject of commercial relations between Britain and Savoy, and excitedly informed Newcastle that he had found in Dumont's monumental collection ⁷⁴ a commercial treaty of 1669 which exempted English vessels from all duties at Nice and Villafranca. ⁷⁵

73. Nassau Papers, A/48, Birtles to Rochford, 26 June 1751 ; SP 92/59, f.99, Cabanis to Grimaldi, 27 June 1751 (copy) ; *ibid.*, f.102, Rochford to Bedford, 7 July 1751 ; Nassau Papers, D/74, Rochford to Yorke, 9 July 1751.

74. Jean Dumont, Corps universel diplomatique du droit de gens (Amsterdam, 1726-31 ; second edition with supplement, 1739).

75. BM Add MSS 32841, f.163, Rochford to Newcastle, 4 November 1752.

Ossorio not only refused to release Consul Cabanis from his security, but in passing observed that the 1669 treaty between Charles II and the Dukes of Savoy had never been ratified by either party, and had long been regarded as null and void. Avoiding any further discussion, Ossorio again urged Rochford to seek a more permanent settlement, such as an Abonnement or a lump sum. 76

It was becoming increasingly evident to Rochford that British merchants and shipowners were much more concerned with convenience and minimal delay than with any abstract right of exemption at Villafranca. Conclusive proof of this appeared before the end of 1752 when a vessel owned by Consul Birtles himself was detained at Villafranca ; Birtles very promptly paid the duty, to enable his cargo of corn to reach Cadiz on time, and rather lamely asked Rochford to remind the Court of Turin that they should not regard this as a precedent. 77

Ossorio's repeated suggestions that Britain negotiate an Abonnement or cash settlement were of course directly inspired by the negotiations with France on the same matter, which were in progress throughout 1752 and 1753. France had no wish to renew the old Abonnement, and was bargaining for a permanent cash liquidation. Though the main points had been readily agreed upon, the negotiation was protracted by a succession of petty wrangles, one of which involved the removal of the French coat of arms from the door of their Consul at Nice. The mutual Declarations were finally signed on 15 December 1753, and France bought her freedom from the Villafranca duty for 1,400,000 livres. 78

76. BM Add MSS 32841, f.190, Rochford to Newcastle, 11 November 1752.

77. Nassau Papers, A/73 and A/74, Birtles to Rochford, 16 December 1752 and 13 January 1753.

78. SP 92/60, f.70, Yonge to Holderness, 5 May 1753 ; SP 92/61, f.20, Rochford to Holderness, 20 January 1753 ; *ibid.*, fos.169 and 188, Rochford to Holderness, 21 November and 22 December 1753.

This was an enormous sum, though much less than Turin had originally demanded, and Consul Birtles hastened to remind Rochford that Britain should settle for a mere fraction of the French payment, in proportion to the far smaller volume of British than French shipping at Villafranca.⁷⁹ Rochford now lost no time in making an exceptionally strong plea to London that the time was ripe for Britain to settle, since the Board of Trade had failed to find sufficient evidence for British exemption. The matter held more urgency now that France had settled her liability for the duty. Far from showing indulgence to English vessels, the authorities at Nice had become more intransigent, and Rochford failed to obtain release for a vessel early in 1754 ; despite an offer by the master to leave part of his cargo as security, he was compelled to pay the duty in coin. Such warning signals convinced Rochford that it had now become "indispensably Necessary for the sake of our Commerce" to negotiate a permanent settlement.⁸⁰

In March 1754, Rochford returned to England on leave, to attend to pressing family affairs, but he also seized the opportunity to cajole and persuade the Secretary of State to open negotiations with the Sardinian Envoy on the basis of the still unanswered Mémoire of 1749. Rochford later claimed that he "took some Pains" whilst in London to get these talks started, but they were in "such forwardness" by the time he returned to Turin that he confidently expected to hear of a settlement very soon, for what he hoped would be a "not very considerable sum."⁸¹

79. Nassau Papers, A/82, Birtles to Rochford, 22 December 1753.

80. SP 92/62, f.10, Rochford to Holderness, 26 January 1754.

81. SP 92/62, f.28, Rochford to Robinson, 23 March 1754 ; Nassau Papers, D/129, Rochford to Gray, 6 November 1754 ; *ibid.*, B/58, Rochford to Birtles, 13 November 1754.

Predictably, Turin's price began far above the level Britain was prepared to pay, on the grounds that this was as an example to other powers, notably Spain, which had yet to come to any agreement over the Villafranca duty.⁸² In order to lend muscle to their demands, the Court of Turin exerted local pressure at Villafranca during Rochford's absence in England. There were two incidents in the same month, September 1754, the second of which involved the seizure of two xebecs from Port Mahon carrying exceptionally valuable cargoes. Mellaredo, the President of the Senate at Nice, displayed unprecedented obstinacy over each of these incidents, and gave Consul Cabanis some very anxious moments.⁸³

Plunged into the midst of these fresh difficulties upon his return to Turin, Rochford found he could make no impression on a very determined ministry. Knowing that a settlement was imminent, he did his utmost to calm the situation until news arrived from London. The expected tidings reached Turin early in November, that mutual Declarations had been signed in October which liquidated Britain's liability to the Villafranca duty for a cash payment. Yet in the very same letter, Rochford was instructed to demand full restitution and reparation for the two Mahon vessels.⁸⁴

After careful thought, Rochford wisely decided to ignore these outdated instructions. Such a demand would do needless harm now that the original cause of the incident had been resolved. Furthermore, Rochford had discovered that the duty asked was very small indeed, because the cargoes had been grossly under-valued, and in fact the xebecs had escaped lightly with only a token

82. SP 92/62, f.114, Charles to Robinson, 27 July 1754.

83. SP 92/62, fos.130, 132, 141, and 145, Charles to Robinson, 7, 14, and 21 September, 5 and 12 October, 1754.

84. SP 92/62, f.195, Robinson to Rochford, 24 October 1754.

payment. This reasoning was appreciated in London, and Rochford's decision to let the matter drop was fully approved.⁸⁵

The sum agreed upon at London was £ 4,000 -- rather more than Rochford's optimistic forecast of "a meer Trifle" -- but it was nevertheless a modest price for the removal of so fruitful a source of vexation and dispute. Rochford modestly took no credit for his share of the work when reporting the settlement to fellow British diplomats,⁸⁶ but Consul Birtles at Genoa was in no doubt about Rochford's contribution ; "it is to your Lordship's Good Conduct that our Trade is now freed from that Burthen. " ⁸⁷

Certainly, without Rochford's personal encouragement whilst on leave in London in 1754, it remains doubtful whether the British ministry would have sought a settlement at this time, and in his careful handling of the disputes on the spot, Rochford saved his government from what might easily have become a complex and acrimonious debate. He therefore deserves some credit at least for the removal of the Villafranca duty, though he was not in a position to effect a similar solution for the Monaco duty, which remained to vex his successor at Turin.⁸⁸

85. SP 92/62, f.165, Rochford to Robinson, 23 November 1754 ; Nassau Papers, D/132, Rochford to Mann, 27 November 1754.

86. Nassau Papers, D/129, Rochford to Gray, 6 November 1754 ; *ibid.*, D/131, Rochford to Keene, 23 November 1754.

87. Nassau Papers, A/87, Birtles to Rochford, 16 November 1754.

88. SP 92/63, f.62, Charles to Robinson, 26 April 1755.

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Rochford and the Diplomatic Corps at Turin

While the centrepiece of Rochford's formal diplomacy at Turin was indoubtedly his share in the negotiations for the Treaty of Aranjuez, to which the following chapter is devoted, his relationship with the diplomatic corps and his observation of certain matters in Italy affecting British interests also deserve some attention. His main dealings with the diplomatic corps involved the representatives of the three great powers, Spain, Austria, and France. His watch on matters particularly interesting to the British government likewise fall under three main heads, namely, French influence at Genoa and on the Island of Corsica, the Modena Marriage Treaty of 1753, and the activities of the Young Pretender and the Jacobite 'court' at Rome.

The basic principle of Charles Emmanuel III's foreign policy was abundantly obvious to all the diplomatic corps at Turin. The only policy consistently pursued by the House of Savoy in the first half of the eighteenth century was the "cautious, piecemeal accumulation" of political and territorial gains.¹ This was the practical application of the King of Sardinia's desire for respect and recognition from the great powers. As one contemporary observed, though he was not strong enough to subdue his neighbours at one stroke, the King of Sardinia was determined to expand little by little, following the famous dictum of Victor Amadeus II, that Italy was like an artichoke, to be eaten leaf by leaf.²

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1. G. Quazza, "Italy's rôle in the European Problems of the first half of the Eighteenth Century," Studies in Diplomatic History, edited by R.M. Hatton and M.S. Anderson (London, 1970), pp. 144-145.
 2. Charles de Broches, Lettres familières écrites d'Italie en 1739 et 1740, edited by Bezard (Paris, 1931), quoted in H. Acton, The Bourbons of Naples, 1734-1825 (London, 1956), p. 74.

Aggrandizement was therefore the key to an understanding of the King of Sardinia's policies in northern Italy. His designs on nearby territories in the Austrian-Controlled Duchy of Milan, his claims on certain districts in Piacenza, and his desire for a wider corridor to the Mediterranean through the Ligurian coastline of the Genoese Republic, had all been laid bare in negotiations for the successive treaties of Vienna (1738), Worms (1743), and Aix-la-Chapelle (1748). His independence of action, and his most likely means of realizing these aims, depended on his skill in playing off one power against another in the hope of concessions from at least one of them. France presented the main threat to Austrian and Spanish interests in Italy, and it was only the strategic location of Savoy and Piedmont which induced any one of them to co-operate with the Court of Turin. ³

Alarmed by the prospect of Bourbon encirclement after the renewal of the Family Compact between France and Spain in 1743, Charles Emmanuel III had assiduously courted Spanish friendship, and the capstone of this policy was of course the marriage of the Duke of Savoy to a Spanish Infanta in 1750. Despite delays in the payment of the dowry, this marriage alliance ensured some degree of affability between the Courts of Madrid and Turin, even through the strains of the negotiations for the Treaty of Aranjuez. ⁴

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3. F. Valsecchi, L'Italia nel Settecento (Milan, 1959), pp. 156-162, 187-194 ; D. Carutti, Storia della diplomazia della Corte di Savoia (Turin, 1875-80), II, 327-328 ; R. Lodge, Studies in Eighteenth Century Diplomacy (London, 1930), pp. 34-9, 51-2, 73-9, 399-401.
 4. See C. Baudi de Vesme, "La Spagna all'epoca di Ferdinando VI e il matrimonio spanolo di Vittorio Amadeo III," Bolletino Storico Bibliografico Subalpino, LI (1953), 123-155, and S. Cordero di Pamparato, "Il matrimonio del duce Vittorio Amadeo III di Savoia," Atti della R. Accademia di Scienza di Torino, XXXIII (1897-8), 98-120 ; Carutti, Storia della diplomazia, II, 327-8, 331. The dowry was still not completely paid when Rochford arrived at Madrid in 1763 ; SP 94/166, f.39, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764, Secret.

By contrast, however, relations between the Courts of Turin and Vienna were very strained indeed when Rochford arrived at Turin. Austro-Sardinian relations had been poisoned soon after the Treaty of Worms by the discovery of Charles Emmanuel III's secret negotiations with France : he had gone so far as to authorize his signature to an informal agreement of 26 December 1745 designed to exclude Austria from Italy. For this betrayal, the Empress Maria Theresa swore she would never forgive the King of Sardinia. ⁵

Yet Britain greatly desired harmony amongst her allies, and one of Rochford's earliest tasks at Turin was to help thaw the chill which had descended between Turin and Vienna. Even before he received any prompting from London, Rochford had on his own initiative recommended tact and moderation to the King of Sardinia's ministers in December 1749, when the dispute with Milan over the passage of salt barges on the River Po first arose. ⁶

Only a week after Bedford commended Rochford for this wise step, Newcastle wrote to Keith at Vienna, reminding him to maintain at all times friendly relations amongst Britain's allies. He added ; "And the Earl of Rochford will be directed to make the same friendly Representations to the Court of Turin." ⁷ Rochford fulfilled Bedford's subsequent instructions to this effect in an audience with Charles Emmanuel III on 21 February 1750, quietly but firmly stressing the need for harmony amongst the allies. ⁸

5. Carutti, Storia della diplomazia della Corte di Savoia, II, 332-4 ; Lodge, Studies in Eighteenth Century Diplomacy, pp.101-122.

6. SP 92/58, f.242, Rochford to Bedford, 10 December 1749.

7. SP 92/58, f.262, Bedford to Rochford, 11 January 1750 ; BM Add MSS 35467, f.226, Newcastle to Keith, 19 January 1750.

8. SP 92/58, f.285, Rochford to Bedford, 21 February 1750.

Rochford did not simply leave the matter there, within the bare letter of his instructions. He also wrote privately to Keith himself, explaining his personal view of the matter :

" . . as a strict Friendship between these two Powers is essential to themselves, as well as to the Common Cause, so it merits the greatest Attention. From the observation I have made, this Court is so displeased with the Conduct of the Court of Vienna, that nothing could prevent them from shewing their Resentment in the strongest manner, but the Faith they have in our Royal Master to interpose." ⁹

Rochford made good use of Keith's reply, assuring the King of Sardinia and his ministers that Keith found the Court of Vienna more inclined towards friendship than the Court of Turin gave them credit for : Rochford promised Bedford that for his part, he would "neglect no opportunity of quieting them on that head." ¹⁰

Part of the coolness between Turin and Vienna was caused by Vienna's delay in sending a representative long after Count Canale had established himself as Sardinian Envoy at Vienna. Count Coloredo did not arrive at Turin until 18 April 1750. ¹¹ Rochford immediately called on him, and was overjoyed to find that Coloredo thought well of Britain and was eager to assist in promoting harmony amongst the allies. Rochford reported to Newcastle, "as I have frequent conversations with him on that head, I shall make it my study to keep him in that way of thinking." ¹²

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- 9. Nassau Papers, D/15, and BM Add MSS 35468, f.58, Rochford to Keith, 28 February 1750.
 - 10. SP 92/58, f.307, Rochford to Bedford, 11 April 1750.
 - 11. SP 92/58, f.314, Rochford to Bedford, 18 April 1750.
 - 12. BM Add MSS 32821, f.175, and SP 92/58, f.330, Rochford to Newcastle, 23 May 1750. Coloredo was later appointed Austrian Minister in London, and was thereafter in Vienna an outspokenly anglophile government minister ; D.B. Horn, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams and European Diplomacy (London, 1930), pp.145, 159.

Rochford's chief contribution to the gradual easing of tension and suspicion between Turin and Vienna, apart from his repeated assurances to the King of Sardinia, was his mediation in an awkward ceremonial dispute which marred the beginning of Coloredo's residence. Rochford's personal friendship with Coloredo helped him to find a partial solution which prevented a minor dispute from developing into a serious rupture between the two courts.

Coloredo held the same rank as Rochford, that of Envoy, so that Rochford had made the first visit, eager to befriend his Austrian counterpart, without any fuss or difficulty. However, Coloredo was also Conseiller intime at Vienna, and in recognition of this high domestic office, he was instructed to demand that the ambassadors of France, Spain, and Naples should also pay him the first visit and give him the title Excellency in his own house. Normally an Envoy would pay the first visit on an Ambassador, and offer him the upper hand as a mark of respect. ¹³

Not surprisingly, the ambassadors refused to recognize this pretension, and would not visit Coloredo ; they were equally bound by their own instructions not to yield such delicate points of honour. Even worse, Coloredo extended his demand to include the government ministers of the King of Sardinia, and refused to give them the title of Excellency unless they also conceded it to him. It was an awkward and potentially dangerous impasse ; Coloredo could do no official business with either the ambassadors or the King's ministers until it was settled. ¹⁴

13. See A. van Wicquefort, L'Ambassadeur et ses fonctions (The Hague, 1680-81, enlarged edition, Amsterdam, 1724), Book I, Section XXI, especially pp. 628-630.

14. SP 92/58, f. 316, Rochford to Bedford, 25 April 1750.

In desperation, Coloredo appealed to Rochford to seek a solution to the problem, or at least some temporary *modus vivendi*. Rochford visited each of the ambassadors privately, but found them resolute and unwilling to listen to his suggestions for a compromise solution. With the King of Sardinia, however, Rochford had some success. Stressing the potential danger of such a dispute, Rochford persuaded the King to instruct his ministers to pay Coloredo the first visit and to give him the title Excellency merely provisionally, pending a reply from Vienna on the question of whether or not a Sardinian Envoy who was also of the Order of the Annunciation at Turin would be entitled to the same respect at Vienna. On this basis, the ministers paid their visits, and Coloredo could at last begin his work at Turin.¹⁵ In the meantime, to avoid any public disputes over precedence, the members of the diplomatic corps were simply not invited to the court ball early in June.¹⁶

Vienna in fact readily backed down. In August 1750, Coloredo was ordered to make the first visit on the ambassadors and to yield them the upper hand, in the expectation that they would out of courtesy give him the title of Excellency. Though the ambassadors of Spain and Naples did so, the French ambassador held strictly to the protocol due to an Envoy, despite assurances from the French minister at Vienna that he would concede at least this much. The French court upheld their ambassador's decision, and in spite of Coloredo's indignation and the resentment of the Court of Vienna, there the matter rested unresolved.¹⁷

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15. SP 92/58, fos.316 and 318, Rochford to Bedford, 25 April and 2 May 1750 ; Nassau Papers, D/25, and BM Add MSS 35469, f.14, Rochford to Keith, 30 May 1750.
 16. BM Add MSS 32821, f.325, and SP 92/58, f.340, Rochford to Newcastle, 13 June 1750.
 17. BM Add MSS 32822, f.404, and SP 92/58, f.361, Rochford to Newcastle, 15 August 1750 ; BM Add MSS 32823, f.1, and SP 92/58, f.363, Rochford to Newcastle, 22 August 1750 ; SP 92/58, f.398, Rochford to Bedford, 21 November 1750.

An interesting though minor affair relating to the Court of Vienna and directly involving Rochford at Turin was the offer of some secret papers by the head of a leading Piedmontese family who had spent some time in the Austrian diplomatic service and now hoped for British help in resuming that employment.

Count Piosasque first approached Rochford in the middle of 1751, offering the British government a collection of secret correspondence relating to treaty negotiations in which he had been involved in 1746 between France, Bavaria, Cologne, and the Palatinate. He hinted at yet more valuable information if and when Britain helped him to find re-employment at Vienna. Piosasque's ostensible reasons for wanting to move were that most of his friends and property were at Vienna rather than Turin. ¹⁸

Rochford had several discreet talks with Piosasque, and relayed to Newcastle various items of information which he let drop concerning the lesser German states, but Newcastle finally agreed with Rochford's first impression that whatever Piosasque had to offer was probably of small importance and hopelessly outdated. After Rochford's warnings of the Count's loquacity, Newcastle may have doubted if his information was worth the risk Britain would run if it became known at Vienna why they supported his bid for re-employment. Though Piosasque renewed his offer in 1752, it was not taken up, which left him rather disgruntled. While demonstrating Newcastle's care not to offend Vienna, this episode also reveals Rochford's readiness to listen to likely sources of intelligence, and suggests that his discretion was recognized at Turin. ¹⁹

18. BM Add MSS 32828, f.261, Rochford to Newcastle, 4 August 1751.

19. BM Add MSS 32830, f.68, Rochford to Newcastle, 26 September 1751 ;
 ibid., 32832, f.84, Rochford to Newcastle, 11 December 1751 ;
 ibid., 32836, f.49, Rochford to Newcastle, 20 May 1752, Separate ;
 ibid., 32837, f.253, Rochford to Newcastle, 1 July 1752, Private.

Coloredo was recalled from Turin early in 1751, ostensibly to command Austrian troops in Lombardy, but in reality as the only possible solution to his unresolved ceremonial dispute with the French ambassador. His departure was widely regretted, for he had been a rarity among Imperial ministers at Turin ; a sensible moderate man who took pains to make himself agreeable. Rochford lamented the loss of a colleague who had become a close personal friend, and continued to correspond with Coloredo even after he had left Turin. ²⁰

Coloredo was not immediately replaced ; for the next two years, the Court of Vienna was content to be represented at Turin by his Secretary, du Beyne, even through the negotiations for the Treaty of Aranjuez. Rochford's use of his personal contacts with du Beyne at this time are noted elsewhere. ²¹

The Spanish ambassador at Turin when Rochford began his residence was Don Manuel de Sada. Keene had recommended Rochford to cultivate the friendship of de Sada, as he knew him to be "a very worthy man." ²² Rochford followed this advice, and was pleased to find that de Sada was well disposed towards England : "a True old Spaniard, and hates anything that has the least connexion with France." ²³

However, de Sada was also elderly and reserved. His dislike of all things French meant that he had a poor understanding

20. SP 92/59, f.31, Rochford to Bedford, 6 March 1751 ; Nassau Papers, D/65 and D/86, Rochford to Coloredo, 15 May and 2 October 1751.

21. See below, Chapter 6

22. BM Add MSS 43423, f.227, Keene to Rochford, 13 October 1749.

23. SP 92/58, f.196, Rochford to Bedford, 9 November 1749.

of that language, and Rochford at times found it exhausting to pursue a conversation with him. Nevertheless, with the help of de Sada's very capable secretary, who had been a long while at Turin, Rochford managed to achieve and maintain a close working relationship with the Spanish embassy.²⁴ This was demonstrated early in 1752 by de Sada's comments on the effect of Rochford's efforts during the Aranjuez negotiations.²⁵ But in view of de Sada's advanced age and poor health, his recall at the end of 1753 came as no surprise to the diplomatic corps at Turin.²⁶

Naturally, Rochford hoped that de Sada's successor as Spanish ambassador would prove equally friendly and helpful. But Rochford had a special reason for anxiety on this point. He wrote to remind Holdernessee, "that it is extremely essential, the having a Spanish Minister here who is not blindly devoted to the French Interest."²⁷ Rochford had evidently gone to some trouble to build up a spirit of friendship amongst uncommitted members of the diplomatic corps at Turin as a buffer against French influence, and had directly helped strengthen the 'Common Cause' at Turin by setting in motion an exchange of Dutch and Sardinian ministers.

Finding the Court of Turin "something discontented" at not having had a Dutch minister since the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, Rochford wrote privately to the British minister at the Hague, suggesting that he drop a hint to the Prince of Orange. The result was that in July 1750 the Dutch named Verelst as their minister to Turin, and the King of Sardinia responded by naming the Count de

24. SP 92/58, f.196, Rochford to Bedford, 9 November 1749 ; Nassau Papers, D/6, Rochford to Keene, 22 November, 1749.

25. See below, Chapter 6 , p.160.

26. SP 92/62, f.4, Rochford to Holdernessee, 12 January 1754 ; de Sada did not die until 1764, when Rochford reported his death from Madrid : SP 94/166, f.96, Rochford to Halifax, 13 February 1764.

27. SP 92/62, f.4, Rochford to Holdernessee, 12 January 1754.

Viry for the Hague.²⁸ The new Dutch minister was instructed to act in close concert with Rochford, and the two seem to have established an enduring personal friendship ; in 1752 Rochford described Verelst as his "particular Friend."²⁹

Rochford need not have worried that his little anti-French coterie in the diplomatic corps would be disrupted by the new Spanish ambassador. Upon his arrival at Turin in 1754, the Conde de Fuentes assured Rochford that he had been instructed to be wary of the French ambassador, but to live in the closest harmony with his British and Austrian colleagues.³⁰

Also in 1754, the diplomatic corps at Turin was joined by a new Austrian minister, Count Merci. He arrived in June, when Rochford was in England on leave, and had the misfortune to suffer a ceremonial dispute with the French ambassador similar to that which had marred Colorado's residence. On his return from leave, Rochford found himself being cited by the French ambassador in justification of refusing to return Merci's first visit. Rochford swiftly corrected this false claim, but failed to find any solution to the impasse.³¹

Rochford, Fuentes, and Merci together maintained what Rochford called the "closest Connexion" at Turin until his own recall early in 1755. Their friendship ensured that French influence was kept to a minimum within the diplomatic corps, to the great "mortification" of successive French ambassadors.³²

28. SP 92/58, f.280, Rochford to Bedford, 4 February 1750 ; BM Add MSS 32822, f.72, and SP 92/58, f.349, Rochford to Newcastle, 4 July 1750.

29. Nassau Papers, D/33, Rochford to Villettes, 25 September 1750 ; BM Add MSS 32823, f.345, and SP 92/58, f.372, Rochford to Newcastle, 26 September 1750 ; Nassau Papers, B/57, Rochford to Allen, 24 May 1752.

30. SP 92/62, f.150, Rochford to Robinson, 26 October 1754.

31. Nassau Papers, D/131, Rochford to Keene, 20 November 1754.

32. SP 92/62, f.175, Rochford to Robinson, 11 December 1754.

The French ambassador above any other member of the diplomatic corps at Turin was the main object of Rochford's watchfulness. Not only was France Britain's chief adversary in Europe, but after the King of Sardinia's underhand negotiations with d'Argenson in 1745-6, the British government was apprehensive of any further moves towards a formal accommodation between France and Savoy-Sardinia. Fortunately for Rochford's peace of mind at Turin, the King of Sardinia and his ministers were profoundly suspicious of the French ; Rochford found that they had an "aversion to anything that has immediate Connection with the Court of France." ³³

The Marquis de la Chetardie was appointed French ambassador to Turin about the same time that Rochford received his appointment, but Chetardie did not arrive there until 18 November 1749. ³⁴ He did his utmost to begin his embassy on a good footing, even to sending baggage lists in advance to the Piedmontese Customs ; an almost unheard-of condescension by a French ambassador. Even so, Rochford thought that notwithstanding "all his eloquence," Chetardie would have a hard time fulfilling his commission at Turin. ³⁵

Chetardie's main task was to persuade the King of Sardinia to join more closely with France in devising "des mesures communes" for Italy, preferably by means of some sort of alliance. Chetardie was not to make any overtures himself, but was to court them by making himself agreeable and gaining the confidence of the King and his ministers. His other specific tasks were to start

33. SP 92/58, f.266, and BM Add MSS 35467, f.230, Rochford to Bedford, 14 January 1750.

34. SP 92/58, f.240, Rochford to Bedford, 3 December 1749.

35. SP 92/58, f.182, Rochford to Bedford, 15 October 1749 ; *ibid.*, f. 266, Rochford to Bedford, 14 January 1750.

talks for the removal of a small duty at the port of Villafranca, and to re-establish a French postal commis at Turin. Chetardie was instructed to live "dans la plus parfaite intimité" with the Spanish ambassador, and as for the new British Envoy, his Instructions added : "Il sera necessaire que le marquis de la Chetardie marque aussi beaucoup d'attention au comte de Rochefort."³⁶

It was Chetardie's misfortune to fail in all but one of these tasks. Though he paid court assiduously, and spent lavishly on entertainments, he failed to gain the respect or the confidence of the King and his ministers. They were willing enough to start talks on the Villafranca duty, but these were conducted elsewhere and Chetardie had no part in them. However, they would not hear of a French postal commis at Turin, because they were convinced the last one spent most of his time smuggling.³⁷

Far from making himself liked at Court, Chetardie alienated most people by his very strict insistence on ceremonial, which he frequently carried to extremes. Among those who did not approve of his behaviour in this respect was the very man with whom he had been instructed to live in closest harmony ; the Spanish ambassador. De Sada privately told Rochford that he feared his own standing at Turin would suffer if he allowed himself to be associated with Chetardie's extremes, and as^a/result had asked to be released from his own instructions to support the French ambassador.³⁸

Even before the end of 1750, Chetardie himself confessed that his business at Turin was at a standstill.³⁹ His conduct had made him personally obnoxious to the King of Sardinia, and

36. Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France . . . Volume XV, Savoie-Sardaigne, ii, 1748-1789, edited by H. de Beaucaire (Paris, 1899), pp.1-28.

37. SP 92/58, f.240, Rochford to Bedford, 3 December 1749 ; *ibid.*, f.303, Rochford to Aldworth, 28 March 1750.

38. BM Add Mss 32821, f.365, and SP 92/58, f.345, Rochford to Newcastle, 20 June 1750.

39. BM Add MSS 32824, f.220, and SP 92/58, f.383, Rochford to Newcastle, 24 October 1750.

shortly after his secretary was involved in a duel with an opera actor in September 1751,⁴⁰ Chetardie was recalled : d'Argenson tersely noted on 7 November, " M. de la Chetardie revient de Turin, étant brouillé avec le Roi de Sardaigne." ⁴¹ Chetardie's departure at least afforded some amusement, for his enormous debts at Turin necessitated the public sale of all his furniture and effects, which went on while the French coat of arms remained above his door. ⁴²

Chetardie was replaced at Turin by the Marquis des Issarts, who was a sick man on his arrival at Turin. His brief stay was plagued by illness, which grew steadily worse, and he was recalled within six months, in March 1753. ⁴³ Chetardie's true successor as French ambassador was the redoubtable Francois-Claude Chauvelin, later Marquis de Chauvelin, who came to Turin in January 1754. ⁴⁴

Chauvelin had enjoyed a distinguished military career before being appointed French minister to Genoa in 1749, whence he was promoted to command French forces on Corsica. ⁴⁵ Rochford applied to the British Consul at Genoa for information about Chauvelin, and Birtles readily confirmed his reputation as an officer of exceptional ability, adding that he was " a Man of Great Parts and a Compleat Courtier . . he will cutt a great Figure at your Place . . he is a Frenchman, consequently very little sincerity in him." ⁴⁶

40. Nassau Papers, D/86, Rochford to Colorado, 2 October 1751 ; *ibid.*, D/87, Rochford to Yorke, 9 October 1751.

41. Recueil des Instructions . . XV, ii, p.37. (see note 36).

42. Nassau Papers, D/110, Rochford to Mann, 22 March 1752.

43. BM Add MSS 32840, f.372, and SP 92/60, f.252, Rochford to Newcastle, 21 October 1752 ; SP 92/61, f.43, Rochford to Holderness, 10 March 1753.

44. SP 92/62, f.4, Rochford to Holderness, 12 January 1754.

45. On Chauvelin at Genoa, see R. Boudard, Gênes et la France dans la deuxième moitié du XVIII^e siècle, 1748-1797 (Paris, 1962), pp.60-64.

46. Nassau Papers, A/83, Birtles to Rochford, 12 January 1754.

Rochford had already decided that Chauvelin merited his "particular Study," and noted that the new French ambassador was beginning his residence very cautiously indeed.⁴⁷ In his first few months at Turin, Chauvelin only rarely saw the King or his ministers, and had little or no connexion with members of the diplomatic corps ; he was devoting all his considerable talents to making himself liked in Turin society. Rochford himself found Chauvelin friendly and considerate.⁴⁸

Unfortunately for Chauvelin, his absence on the day when the new Austrian minister, Merci, called to pay his first visit, led to yet another awkward ceremonial dispute. There were faults on both sides, but the wrangle undid much of Chauvelin's careful preparatory work.⁴⁹ In addition, he was embarrassed by the attentions of the Genoese minister, Gastaldi, who idolized Chauvelin and committed many follies in his misguided attempts to help the French ambassador.⁵⁰

In spite of these problems, Chauvelin at last made his secret offer of an alliance with France towards the end of 1754. Rochford's contacts within the Council informed him that the King remained as cautious as ever, but that Ossorio and the Duke of Savoy rejected the overture with "great Warmth."⁵¹ The proposals came to nothing, and Chauvelin sadly reported that the Court of Turin was "tres opposé à toute espèce d'engagement" with France.⁵²

47. SP 92/61, f.143, Rochford to Holderness, 22 September 1753.

48. SP 92/62, fos.4 and 21, Rochford to Holderness, 12 January and 2 March (Separate) 1754.

49. Nassau Papers, D/133, Rochford to Guy Dickens, 4 December 1754.

50. SP 92/62, f.183, Rochford to Robinson, 28 December 1754 ; Nassau Papers, D/134, Rochford to Gray, 8 January 1755.

51. SP 92/62, fos.177 and 179, Rochford to Robinson, 21 December 1754.

52. Recueil des Instructions . . Savoie-Sardaigne, ii, p.52.

Rochford therefore came to the end of his ministry confident in the knowledge that his efforts to maintain harmony within the diplomatic corps at Turin in order to combat French influence had not been entirely fruitless. Though there were definite limits to the influence a British Envoy could exert over the King of Sardinia and his ministers, Rochford could console himself with the certainty that the influence of successive French ambassadors at Turin was by comparison virtually nil.

The relations of the King of Sardinia with the neighbouring republic of Genoa were deserving of attention by the British Envoy at Turin for two main reasons in the 1750s : firstly, relations were distinctly strained for reasons of economic rivalry as well as from fears of territorial aggrandisement, and secondly, France wielded considerable influence at Genoa and had lent military aid to the republic to help subdue insurgents on the Island of Corsica. These were ample reasons for Rochford to keep himself well-informed of affairs relating to Genoa and Corsica.

Having suffered from the rivalry of Leghorn as a great Mediterranean entrepôt, the Genoese deeply resented the attempts of the King of Sardinia to develop his new port at Villafranca, which would draw yet more trade away from Genoa, and this resentment was expressed in petty disputes over commercial matters at the main border crossing points with Piedmont ; Rochford twice reported constant friction from such disputes. ⁵³

53. SP 92/59, f.54, Rochford to Bedford, 1 May 1751 ; SP 92/61, f.138, Rochford to Holderness, 5 September 1753.

Knowing the King of Sardinia's desire for a wider corridor to the Mediterranean, the Genoese also feared his designs on the Ligurian coastline between Monaco and Savona. Little wonder, therefore, when the town of San Remo rose in revolt against inept Genoese administration in 1753, that Genoa immediately suspected the Court of Turin of fomenting it. Turin gave the customary assurances that it would not aid the rebels in any way, but Genoa then found that some rebel leaders had found shelter in Piedmont, and even in Turin itself. The revolt itself was finally crushed by an expensive naval expedition, but the episode deeply soured an already uneasy situation between the two neighbours.⁵⁴

Genoa's restive subjects on the Island of Corsica feared that this same naval expedition might be sent next to crush them, but it was disbanded for lack of funds to pay the men.⁵⁵ Rochford heard this from the British Consul at Genoa, John Birtles, who proved to be his most regular and reliable source of information regarding Genoa and Corsica. Thanks to Birtles's correspondents at Bastia, Rochford was able to supply the British government with much detailed and surprisingly accurate intelligence of French activities on Corsica.

Rochford's residence at Turin witnessed a phase of temporary withdrawal by France, which culminated in the complete evacuation of French troops during 1753. His reports gave detailed information about the popularity of the French commander, de Cursay, with the islanders, which gave rise to rumours that France planned to acquire the island for herself ;⁵⁶ on de Cursay's disputes

54. Nassau Papers, A/76-8, Birtles to Rochford, 16, 23, and 30 June 1753 ; SP 92/61, f.186, Rochford to Holderness, 15 December 1753.

55. Nassau Papers, A/78, Birtles to Rochford, 30 June 1753.

56. SP 92/58, f.210, Rochford to Bedford, 5 November 1749 ; Nassau Papers, A/7, Birtles to Rochford, 6 December 1749 ; *ibid.*, D/7, Rochford to Mann, 3 December 1749 ; SP 92/58, f.220, Rochford to Bedford, 29 November 1749.

with Grimaldi, the Genoese Commissioner, leading to demands by Genoa for de Cursay's recall ; on negotiations by Chauvelin for a new agreement between Genoa and the Corsican leaders, issuing in the Convention of 1752 ; ⁵⁷ and finally on de Cursay's arrest late in 1752 on orders from Paris, followed by the evacuation of 1753. ⁵⁸ Rochford's sources brought him the news of de Cursay's arrest before it was known even by the King of Sardinia's own ministers at Turin. ⁵⁹

The details of these reports need not concern us here, but Rochford's dealings with the ministry at Turin relating to Corsica are noteworthy in view of the later crisis over the French acquisition of Corsica in 1768-9, which then directly concerned Rochford as British ambassador in Paris.

Soon after his arrival at Turin, when he first heard rumours that France intended to conquer Corsica for herself, Rochford attempted to sound the King of Sardinia's ministers for their view of a situation which held grave possibilities regarding the balance of power in the Mediterranean. He found that they disbelieved such rumours entirely, and were inclined rather to think that France was weary of her expensive commitment on Corsica, now that its war-time value had ended, and that France

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57. BM Add MSS 32828, f.241, and SP 92/59, f.115, Rochford to Holderness, 28 July 1751 ; SP 92/59, f.141, Rochford to Holderness, 15 September 1751 ; BM Add MSS 32838, f.237, and SP 92/60, f.213, Rochford to Newcastle, 22 July 1752, are among the more important reports. It would be pointless to list all of Birtles's letters in the Nassau Papers, since almost every one of them brought some item of news regarding Corsica.
58. SP 92/60, f.270, Rochford to Holderness, 23 December 1752 ; SP 92/61, f.152, Rochford to Holderness, 17 October 1753. For a useful discussion of the literature on Corsica at this time, see Thadd E. Hall, "France and the Eighteenth Century Corsican Question," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1966) especially pp.25-127.
59. SP 92/60, f.270, Rochford to Holderness, 23 December 1753.

would withdraw entirely if she could but find a decent pretext for doing so.⁶⁰ This report corresponded more closely to existing French policy than was believed in England at this time ; indeed, it was not until the middle of 1751 that Ossorio felt sufficiently convinced of it himself to tell Rochford that he expected soon to see a complete French evacuation.⁶¹

Both the British government and the King of Sardinia believed the other could play a useful mediatory rôle over the Corsican problem, and supplant French influence at Genoa ; but neither was willing to expend the necessary subsidies for this. As early as March 1750, Rochford saw a letter from the Sardinian Envoy in London which reported verbal suggestions by Bedford that Turin should offer to mediate a settlement between the Genoese and their unruly islanders, but in pursuing this further, Rochford found that the King of Sardinia refused to involve himself and help solve his closest rival's problems.⁶²

A year later, the suggestion moved in the other direction ; Ossorio suggested to Rochford that Britain ought to intervene, demand French withdrawal from Corsica, and offer her own services to Genoa as a peace-keeping force on the island.⁶³ Consul Birtles at Genoa thought there was at this time a chance that Genoa might accept such an offer, they were so exasperated by de Cursay's activities.⁶⁴

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- 60. SP 92/58, f.210, Rochford to Bedford, 5 November 1749 ; Nassau Papers, D/6, Rochford to Keene, 22 November 1749.
 - 61. SP 92/59, f.95, Rochford to Bedford, 26 June 1751 ; Nassau Papers, B/48, Rochford to Birtles, 28 July 1751.
 - 62. SP 92/58, f.300, Rochford to Bedford, 21 March 1750.
 - 63. SP 92/59, f.95, Rochford to Bedford, 26 June 1751 ; BM Add MSS 32829, f.151, and SP 92/59, f.122, Holderness to Rochford, 15 August 1751.
 - 64. Nassau Papers, A/54, Birtles to Rochford, 18 September 1751.

Rochford himself, however, rightly guessed that Britain would not intervene, for the very same reasons that France was anxious to be rid of her entanglement in Corsica. Rochford thought that the Court of Turin ahead of any other should be willing to intervene, being far more directly affected by the political fate of Corsica. But the King of Sardinia's ministers passed the matter off as being of little interest or importance to them. Rochford doubted if this was truly so, and he thought his own government ought to have taken a closer interest in the fate of Corsica than yet appeared to be the case :

" Tho' if I may be allowed to differ in my politicks from some of my correspondents, I think the french [sic] having or not having a port so near Italy, of the utmost consequence in time of war." ⁶⁵

Here Rochford put his finger on the strategic significance of Corsica, and the reason for France's involvement there. While Savoy-Sardinia remained allied to Britain and Austria, forming a barrier to a land invasion of northern Italy, France's easiest means of access to that area was the port of Genoa itself. Quite apart from the value of the Corsican ports for the French navy, and the undesirability of having them in the hands of another power, France's aid in quelling the insurgents on Corsica was the price she had to pay to retain Genoa as a mainland doorway to northern Italy. ⁶⁶ Rochford saw that this was why France also financed the development of new ports at Massa and Spetia, and the construction of a new road linking Spetia to the Val de Taro, enabling troops to reach Parma from the coast in three days. ⁶⁷

65. Nassau Papers, D/81, Rochford to Yorke, 11 September 1751.

66. See Hall (note 58), pp.51-62.

67. Nassau Papers, D/74, Rochford to Yorke, 9 July 1751.

Rochford's awareness of the actual as well as the apparent strategic considerations of France's involvement in Corsica, which he may have felt were not fully appreciated at London, proved valuable later in his career, when the Corsican problem assumed much greater urgency for the balance of power in the Mediterranean.

One of Genoa's neighbours across the Appennines in northern Italy was the Duchy of Modena. Francis III d'Este, Duke of Modena, had married his only son Ercole Rinaldo to a Malaspina Duchess, Maria Teresa of Alberigo, but after producing a daughter in 1750, the couple separated and thereafter lived apart. Anxious to secure his dynasty, Francis III set about finding a suitable future husband for his infant grand-daughter. He even made secret approaches to George II in 1751, but finding no interest from the House of Hanover, Francis had turned to the Court of Vienna. The result was a secret Marriage Convention, signed on 11 May 1753 and ratified the following June, which betrothed the young Archduke Leopold to the infant Princess of Modena. As part of the deal, which was of course a significant increase in Austrian influence in central Italy, Francis III became Governor of Milan and Commander of Austrian forces in the north. ⁶⁸

Rochford was instructed in April 1753 to say nothing at Turin about this treaty, even though it was by then widely rumoured. ⁶⁹ He held strictly to these instructions, in spite

68. Valsecchi, L'Italia nel Settecento, pp.244-247 ; Carutti, Storia della diplomazia della corte di Savoia, II, 335-6.

69. SP 92/61, f.200, Holdernessee to Rochford, 2 April 1753.

of Ossorio's attempts to draw him out on the subject in June. The King of Sardinia grumbled at Modena's neglect of his own son, the Duke of Chablais, but Rochford knew that such an alliance would certainly have alarmed everyone else in Italy. ⁷⁰

It was not until August 1753, when it was safely signed and sealed, that Rochford received instructions to make a formal notification of the Modena Marriage Treaty at Turin. His unenviable task was to explain to an ally why that ally had been pointedly ignored during a negotiation which was of very considerable interest to them. Newcastle merely suggested to Rochford to make the excuse that this was seen in London as a delicate affair, "of a Personal & Family Nature," in which George II had not wished to interfere. Ossorio grudgingly accepted this thin excuse, but complained to Rochford at some length that they "should not have been kept so long in the Dark" by their principal ally. ⁷¹

In fact, Britain's silence had been simply to prevent the Court of Turin from having any pretext to interfere in the negotiation. Though the King of Sardinia joined the chorus of approbation for a measure which further stabilized Italian politics, Rochford was sure he would have done his utmost to thwart the choice of an Austrian candidate if he had known in time. ⁷²

Such an increase in Austrian influence in Modena imposed yet another restraint on the King of Sardinia's freedom of action, and the French ambassador's secretary, Boyer, told Rochford that

70. SP 92/61, f.101, Rochford to Holderness, 30 June 1753 ; Nassau Papers, A/79, Birtles to Rochford, 14 July 1753.

71. SP 92/61, f.205, Newcastle to Rochford, 19 July 1753 ; *ibid.*, f.130, Rochford to Holderness, 8 August 1753.

72. SP 92/61, f.116, Rochford to Holderness, 21 July 1753.; *ibid.*, f.156, Rochford to Holderness, 24 October 1753.

he knew the King of Sardinia was "extremely disgusted at this Affair," as was the French government.⁷³ But in one sense, Britain's silence served as a reminder to Charles Emmanuel III, after his obstinacy during the Aranjuez negotiations, that Britain did not simply pander to his narrow ambitions, but could follow an Italian policy independent of the Court of Turin when so required by considerations of European stability.

Apart from Turin, which was perhaps the chief focus of British interest in Italy in the early 1750s, the city of Rome was frequently the cause on those rare occasions when the ministers in London turned their thoughts to Italy, because of the existence there under Papal protection of that Stuart 'court' which had so recently challenged the Hanoverian dynasty in the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. Despite Culloden and its grim aftermath, Jacobitism was still a source of considerable anxiety for British ministers well into the 1750s.⁷⁴ In particular, much effort and expense was devoted in these years to keeping a watch on the movements of the Young Pretender, Prince Charles Edward Stuart, and his attempts to drum up support for his cause across Europe. Though the Young Pretender maintained a household at Avignon, his father's 'court' at Rome remained the spiritual home of the Jacobite movement and the traditional fountainhead of news.⁷⁵

73. SP 92/61, f.134, Rochford to Holderness, 18 August 1753.

74. The best recent summary of government attitudes to Jacobitism during and after 1745 is found in the Introduction by Romney Sedgwick to The History of Parliament ; The House of Commons, 1715-1754 (London, 1970), I, 69-77. Also useful is C. Petrie, The Jacobite Movement, The Last Phase, 1716-1807 (London, 1950), especially pp.116-159. Older works include J.H. Jesse, Memoirs of the Pretenders and their Adherents (London, 1860), pp.234-357, and Andrew Lang, Pickle the Spy (1897), and Prince Charles Edward Stuart (London, 1903).

75. Britain was still urging that he be banished entirely from France in 1749 and 1751 ; Bedford Correspondence (1842-6), II, 3, 68.

Since Britain had no diplomatic representative at Rome, nor indeed at Naples until 1753, Rochford had been briefed to report whatever he heard at Turin of the Pretender's movements ; the same duty rested with the British ministers at Venice and Florence. ⁷⁶ Rochford's characteristic zeal took him a step further than this, however, and he started up a correspondence with the British Consul at Naples, who was well-placed to hear the latest rumours. Consul Allen's first letter early in 1750 reported that he had heard nothing of the Pretender for several months. ⁷⁷

In response to his first discreet enquiries at Turin, Rochford was told by the King of Sardinia's ministers that the most recent letters from their representatives in Italy assured them that the Pretender was not in that part of Europe. ⁷⁸ But this assurance became suspect when Allen informed Rochford that his nephew at Messina had heard of the "Young Chevalier" quite recently ; at Ancona on the Adriatic coast, with a retinue of twenty, getting riotously drunk. This report had an authentic ring, and tallied with other rumours Rochford had since heard privately at Turin. ⁷⁹

Not surprisingly after this, Rochford tended to rely on Allen's information rather than enquire of the King's ministers at Turin. In November 1750, thanks to Allen, Rochford was able to report that the Old Pretender at Rome and his son Henry, Cardinal York, had no idea where Charles Edward was, and that they were

76. Horn, Great Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1967), pp.332-334.

77. Nassau Papers, A/14, Allen to Rochford, 28 February 1750.

78. SP 92/58, f.247, Rochford to Bedford, 17 December 1749.

79. Nassau Papers, A/15, Allen to Rochford, 14 March 1750 ; *ibid.*, B/15, Rochford to Allen, 11 April 1750.

anxious at having had no reliable news of him. His letters were all unsigned and undated, and simply related that he had been ill, but had recovered, and still had ample funds. This information came through the Cardinal's confessor, who also observed that while Charles Edward had plenty of money, he would not think of marriage, which was what his father wanted most for him. ⁸⁰

George II was greatly pleased at this fresh information, and Bedford praised Rochford for his diligence in obtaining it from Consul Allen. He instructed Rochford to continue to discover all he could concerning the Young Pretender, as this was a matter of great interest to the King. ⁸¹

Rochford did not consider his duty limited to the gathering of information ; he also kept an alert eye on travellers passing through Turin, and twice reported those whom he considered important Jacobite adherents. Early in 1750, three Scots named MacDonald stopped at Turin on their way to Rome, and though they stayed three days they studiously avoided Rochford's attempts to talk with them. ⁸² In September 1752, Rochford noted the arrival at Turin of two Irishmen named O'Sullivan and O'Brien, the latter calling himself Lord Lisamore, both of whom boasted of having been with Charles Edward in Scotland during 1745. They were now in French service, but Rochford could not discover anything else about them in their brief sojourn at Turin. ⁸³

Between these two sets of visitors, Rochford had a most interesting visitor of his own in June 1751 ; a government spy,

80. SP 92/58, f.389, Rochford to Bedford, 21 November 1750.

81. SP 92/58, f.391, Bedford to Rochford, 29 November 1750 O.S.

82. SP 92/58, f.303, Rochford to Aldworth, 28 March 1750 ; SP 92/59, f.2, Rochford to Bedford, 2 January 1751.

83. BM Add MSS 32840, f.246, and SP 92/60, f.241, Rochford to Newcastle, 30 September 1752.

named John Philips. He told Rochford he had been in the Guards before volunteering to serve as a spy in the rebel army in 1745. After the rebellion, Philips had gone to Lisbon to recover a debt, and there met a party of Jacobite exiles who greeted him as one of their own, assuring him that the cause was still alive and nearer to success than the British government suspected. Philips had therefore accompanied them to Avignon in the hope of discovering what schemes were afoot, and he had succeeded in taking a copy of a letter in cipher left unattended on the desk of the Prince's secretary, Kelly. Philips had been taken so far into their confidence that Kelly had given him letters of introduction to the Cardinal and other supporters at Rome, and had sent Philips off to Rome in the company of a messenger. Philips managed to miss his boat at Marseilles, so that he could hand his copy of the letter to the British minister at Turin, and still be able to rejoin the Jacobite messenger at Rome with a plausible excuse. ⁸⁴

After a second long talk with Philips on 5 June, Rochford was convinced he was genuine : "He seems a very sensible Man, & capable of making useful Discoveries." Rochford therefore took it upon himself to send Philips on to Rome immediately. He equipped the spy with money and a cipher so that he could safely report his findings direct to Rochford at Turin. ⁸⁵

Before he left for Rome, Philips told Rochford all he had heard at Avignon about Jacobite 'managers' in London. One of these, a hair merchant named Burck, had lately been arrested for a debt, but Kelly was anxious that his papers might have been seized as well. This information was of considerable interest to

84. SP 92/59, f.75, Rochford to Bedford, 2 June 1751. The letter copied by Philips at Avignon, in cipher, dated 16 March 1750, is f.77.

85. SP 92/59, f.84, Rochford to Aldworth, 5 June 1751.

the Secretaries of State in London : Burck was one of several leading Jacobites taken up at this time, but none of his papers had as yet been found. Bedford commended Rochford's initiative in sending Philips to Rome, and once again was full of praise for Rochford's zeal regarding the Jacobite problem.⁸⁶

Within a month, Rochford had a report from Philips which amply justified his estimation of the spy's resourcefulness. Philips had gained interviews with both the Old Pretender and Cardinal York, and from their conversation was able to confirm the rumours that the Young Pretender had recently been at Berlin seeking Prussian support for his cause. He had been so well disguised there that even the French ambassador, an old personal friend, had failed to recognize him. Charles Edward claimed to have great schemes afoot for action as soon as George II died, or sooner, and boasted that he was assured of help from France and Spain. At Rome, two Scots messengers named Lumsdale and Turrel were preparing to carry this news to Spain and Ireland.⁸⁷

From Rome, Philips went to Naples, where he approached Consul Allen for assistance ; the money Rochford had given him was now almost exhausted. Allen was very properly suspicious of Philips, and not until Philips had shown him a letter signed by Rochford did Allen advance him his fare to Genoa. Even so, Allen warned Consul Birtles to expect orders from Rochford to arrest the man on arrival if he proved to be an imposter. Rochford quickly assured both Consuls that Philips was indeed all that he said he was ; but Rochford was much less prompt in repaying Allen the money he had advanced to Philips, keeping him waiting over a year.⁸⁸

86. SP 92/59, f.86, Bedford to Rochford, 10 June 1751.

87. SP 92/59, f.107, and BM Add MSS 32828, f.151, Rochford to Holderness, 13 July 1751.

88. Nassau Papers, A/49, Allen to Rochford, 3 August 1751 ; *ibid.*, A/50, A/52, A/65, A/72, Allen to Rochford, 7 August 1751, 7 September 1751, 6 June 1752, 12 December 1752.

This was apparently the last Rochford heard of Philips, but Allen continued to be a useful source of news about the Young Pretender's reported movements. Not long after the Philips episode, Allen informed Rochford that Charles Edward had been seen at Venice and Genoa quite recently, on his way to Paris.⁸⁹ There may therefore have been some substance to the report which reached England in the following year that the Young Pretender had been in Savoy. The Sardinian ambassador in Paris also reported this, believing Rochford to be the original source of the rumour ; Rochford at once denied this at Turin, and asked Albemarle to set the matter right at Paris.⁹⁰

The report had in fact come from Sir Horace Mann at Florence. Mann's correspondence with Cardinal Albani at Rome made him a much more prolific reporter than Rochford on Jacobite affairs, but Mann was reluctant to admit that Albani fed him with rather selective and at times misleading information. Furthermore, Mann seemed jealous of Rochford's interest in the Young Pretender, and in January 1752 Rochford took him to task :

"You have never in any of y^r Letters mentioned the Young Pretender to me. I should be glad to know if your Intelligence tallys with mine, as I should by that means be better able to judge of its merit."

Rochford then recited, not his latest news from Allen, but the already stale news of the Pretender's travels in Germany and Poland.⁹¹ Mann's reply is not known, but in August that year, Rochford offered Mann the services of his own contacts at Naples and at Rome.⁹²

89. Nassau Papers, A/52, Allen to Rochford, 7 September 1751.

90. Nassau Papers, D/116, Rochford to Albemarle, 10 June 1752.

91. Nassau Papers, D/100, Rochford to Mann, 12 January 1752.

92. Nassau Papers, D/126, Rochford to Mann, 16 August 1752. On Albani, see L. Lewis, Connoisseurs and Secret Agents in Eighteenth Century Rome (London, 1961), passim. I have yet to receive microfilm of SP 105/309-310, Archives of British Legations, Tuscany, 1748-54, which may contain some of Rochford's letters to Mann.

Rochford's own contact in Rome, as yet unidentified, supplied him with his most important piece of information about the Jacobite 'court' and the Young Pretender in 1752. Rochford's informant had seen a letter written by the Polish minister at Rome reporting a quarrel between the Old Pretender and his son, Cardinal York. The latter had set up his own household elsewhere in the city, much to his father's distress. Even as he was doing so, news arrived that the Young Pretender had broken up his household at Avignon : his servants had been paid off, and his closest associates had dispersed, some to Paris, some to Bologna. At Turin, Rochford later heard people remark that the Young Pretender had done the very same thing just before the Rebellion of 1745. Other rumours claimed that a landing in Ireland was planned if not imminent. But Rochford personally doubted if Charles Edward was ready to run "such foolish risques" again. ⁹³

There was in fact a plot by English Jacobites planned for November 1752, now known as the Elibank Plot, which was largely uncovered during that winter ; its failure was symbolised by the execution of Archibald Cameron in 1753. ⁹⁴ This period was therefore one of considerable anxiety for the British government, and Rochford was more justified than he realized in taking a small personal initiative of his own early in 1753.

When he took his leave to make the Tour of Italy in 1753, Rochford devoted his first few weeks to a sojourn at Rome, during which he took "some pains" to make every possible discreet enquiry concerning the Jacobite cause. Regrettably, he was unable to

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93. Nassau Papers, D/123, Rochford to Dayrolles, 29 July 1752 ; BM Add MSS 32838, f.329, and SP 92/60, f.219, Rochford to Newcastle, 29 July 1752.
94. Petrie, The Jacobite Movement, The Last Phase, pp.149-155. Rochford gave no credence to a rumour that the Pretender had changed his religion in 1752 ; BM Add MSS 32839, f.185, and SP 92/60, f.221, Rochford to Newcastle, 12 August 1752.

discover much about the Young Pretender himself, save that he was thought to be in France, and that some of the Cardinals had had undated letters from him at Paris relating little more than the state of his health. On the other hand, the insight which Rochford gained into the situation of the Jacobite 'court' at Rome, and the extent of its support there, made his efforts and enquiries well worthwhile.

Rochford's main conclusion was that although those who openly espoused the Jacobite cause boasted great hopes from the assistance obtained by the Pretender at various European capitals, they did so not from any basis in fact but merely to keep up the spirits of their party, "which seem (thank God) in a Languishing condition." Very few of the Cardinals, Rochford found, cared to support the Jacobites openly, and those who did, notably Cardinals Lante and Valenti, were regarded as French pensionaries anyway. Rochford heard from someone in Valenti's household that when the Young Pretender broke up his establishment at Avignon, the Papal Legate absolutely refused to store his furniture or effects in the Palace. 95

This report from Rochford was in fact one of the earliest indications that Papal support for the Stuart cause was on the wane after the failure of 1745. The episode at Avignon interestingly foreshadows the Pope's refusal to recognize the claims of the Young Pretender to the English throne on the death of his father in 1766. 96

95. SP 92/61, f.63, Rochford to Holderness, from Rome, 21 April 1753.

96. Petrie, The Jacobite Movement, The Last Phase, p.167.

Rochford's report from Rome in 1753 was apparently his last contribution on the subject of the Young Pretender. In that year, Sir James Gray was appointed British Envoy to Naples, and his Instructions required him to keep a special watch on the Pretender's adherents at Rome. ⁹⁷

Though his reports by themselves were perhaps of only limited value, Rochford's attention to the Jacobite problem offers yet further instances of his zeal and personal initiative as Envoy. In this, as in his dealings with the diplomatic corps at Turin, Rochford displayed considerable talent for making friends and establishing reliable contacts. Clearly his warmth and affability made him a good listener as well as a good talker. He undoubtedly possessed some measure of that essential quality in a diplomat which Chesterfield described as the ability to "get into all the secrets" at the court where he resides. ⁹⁸

However, other equally essential qualities, notably patience, firmness, and persuasiveness were required of Rochford in the course of his most important piece of formal diplomacy at Turin, to which the following chapter is devoted.

97. Public Record Office, FO 90/40, Secret Instructions for Sir James Gray, 24 September 1753, Clause 3 ; Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, 1689-1789, p.76.

98. Chesterfield's Letters, edited by J. Bradshaw (1892), I, 155.

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Negotiations at Turin for the Treaty
of Aranjuez, 1751-1752

Rochford's share in the negotiations which led to the signing of the Treaty of Aranjuez between the Courts of Madrid, Vienna, and Turin on 14 June 1752 has nowhere been examined in any detail : most of the standard accounts of the negotiation fail even to mention him.¹ Although Madrid was the scene of the negotiation proper, Rochford's role at Turin was not unimportant, for it was his task to persuade a reluctant court to join the treaty discussions against its inclination, then when difficulties and ill-feeling arose between Turin and Vienna, to try to reconcile these two parties. An examination of Rochford's efforts at Turin is of value not only for the light thus shed on the attitudes of the King of Sardinia and his ministers, but also because it reveals with painful clarity the limitations to Britain's influence over the Court of Turin.

The negotiation commenced at Madrid in May 1751 with an Austrian proposal for the mutual guarantee by Spain and Austria of Habsburg and Bourbon territories in Italy, as they had been fixed in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. At London, however, Newcastle

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1. The best account in English is contained in R. Lodge, "Sir Benjamin Keene, K.B. ; A Study of Anglo-Spanish Relations in the Earlier Part of the Eighteenth Century," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 4th series, XV (1932), pp.16-25. In Italian, see E. Rota, Le Origini del Risorgimento, 1700-1800 (Milan, 1938), I, 248-251, using unpublished correspondence between Bogino and Christiani, at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan ; D. Carutti, Storia della diplomazia della Corte di Savoia (Turin, 1875-8), II, 332-339 ; F. Cognasso, I Savoia nella politica Europa (Milan, 1941) pp.236-7. The negotiations are noticed only briefly in W. Coxe, Memoirs of the Kings of Spain of the House of Bourbon (London, 1813), III, 119-121, and in L. Dimier, Histoire de Savoie (Paris, 1913), pp.262-264.

seized upon this simple affirmation of the peace settlement as an opportunity to drive a wedge between France and Spain, and raise another obstacle to French interference in Italy, by widening the proposal to include Britain and Savoy-Sardinia. There was a good ostensible reason for such an amplification. The Austrian project named only Naples, Parma, and Tuscany as acceding powers, yet as Newcastle pointed out, unless it included Savoy-Sardinia as the most powerful of the Italian states and that most directly threatened by French aggression in that area, no arrangement for the tranquility of Italy could hope to last for long. ²

Though holding no territories in Italy, Britain could claim an interest in the matter through her long-standing alliance with the Court of Turin and her naval power in the Mediterranean. Newcastle offered to act as mediator for the inclusion of Turin. ³ However, this bold scheme rested on two rather hopeful assumptions. Newcastle expected that Spain and Austria would easily be convinced of the desirability of including Britain and her Sardinian protégé. Most crucial of all was his assumption that the King of Sardinia would meekly follow Britain's lead. Newcastle failed to take warning from the fact that Turin had only recently spurned proposals made by Spain for a treaty to secure the status quo in Italy, during the negotiations at Madrid for the marriage of the Duke of Savoy to the Spanish Infanta in 1750. ⁴

2. Lodge, "Sir Benjamin Keene . . .," pp. 17-18.

3. Similar British mediation had characterized the negotiations for the Treaty of Worms, 1742-3; R. Lodge, Studies in Eighteenth Century Diplomacy (London, 1930), pp. 31-79.

4. C. Baudi di Vesme, "La Spagna all'epoca di Ferdinando VI e il Matrimonio spagnolo di Vittorio Amadeo III," Bollettino Storico Bibliografico Subalpino, LI (1953), especially pp. 153-4.

Rochford knew from the gossip of the diplomatic corps at Turin that there was a negotiation afoot at Madrid long before he received so much as a hint about it from London. Ossorio asked him late in August 1751 whether he had any instructions on the matter, and Rochford had to admit he was officially uninformed. ⁵

Three weeks later, Rochford received his first official notification, in the form of a summary of the discussions so far at Madrid, followed by instructions to make a formal communication of these facts to the Court of Turin. Rochford was then to make a discreet enquiry as to the sentiments of the King of Sardinia towards the projected treaty between Spain and Austria, particularly his willingness to become a partner in the treaty under Britain's mediation. Finally, Rochford was to ask that orders be sent to the Sardinian ambassador at Madrid to confer and co-operate with his British counterpart on this issue. ⁶

Rochford had no difficulty fulfilling the first and last parts of these instructions quite promptly. He made the formal communication to Ossorio on the very same day he received his bulky dispatch from Holdernessee, 19 September 1751, and although Rochford fell lame overnight with a painful boil on his leg, Ossorio called at the Envoy's house the following evening. There he informed Rochford that Charles Emmanuel III was most grateful for Britain's notification, and had already sent orders to the Sardinian ambassador at Madrid, Count St Marsan, to co-operate fully with Sir Benjamin Keene. ⁷

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5. SP 92/59, f.133, and BM Add MSS 32829, f.190, Rochford to Holdernessee, 1 September 1751.
 6. SP 92/59, f.126, and BM Add MSS 32829, f.214, Holdernessee to Rochford, 29 August 1751 O.S., Very Secret.
 7. SP 92/59, f.143, Rochford to Holdernessee, 22 September 1751.

Ossorio stayed talking at Rochford's bedside for more than two hours, during which time Rochford did his utmost to pursue the middle part of his instructions. He gathered from Ossorio's remarks that the King of Sardinia, far from being enthusiastic about the treaty project, was very reluctant to be involved at all. Ossorio stated quite bluntly, though only as his private opinion, that he could see little advantage in the scheme, and that the Court of Turin would not join without good reason.⁸

Rochford later wrote to his friend Yorke at Paris that this first exchange made him doubt if Turin would join "without being well paid for it."⁹ His first reports to Holdernessee were likewise very cautious and restrained. It was obvious that the Court of Turin saw no tangible gain for itself in a treaty which merely confirmed the provisions of Aix-la-Chapelle. The only effective 'bait' Rochford could envisage which would ensure the adherence of the King of Sardinia was a promise for the reversion to the whole Duchy of Parma, but this was an unthinkable large concession for the Courts of Madrid and Vienna. In fact, the mutual guarantees of the present project would require Charles Emmanuel III to confirm Don Philip in his possession of Parma. On the other hand, the attraction of a fresh mutual guarantee was the continuation of peace and stability in Italy, if only for a few more years, which the Court of Turin desperately needed after the destruction and crippling loans of the last war. Rochford hoped that Turin would opt for peace and quiet at this juncture,

8. SP 92/59, fos. 143 and 145, Rochford to Holdernessee, 22 and 26 September 1751.

9. Nassau Papers, D/87, Rochford to Yorke, 9 October 1751.

though he feared that in yielding their theoretical freedom of movement they would probably display the utmost reluctance.¹⁰

To his fellow British diplomats at Paris and Madrid, however, Rochford was even less optimistic, indeed, almost gloomy. Writing to Albemarle, Rochford claimed that Ossorio's "cold Regard" for the treaty proposals "made me open my Eyes very wide upon a Court that . . . is far from being shortsighted."¹¹ He was more explicit to Keene. Quite simply, Rochford was sure from his observation of their system that the Court of Turin dreaded having its hands tied by unnecessary peacetime treaties. Their established policy was to remain free of such ties in Italy, so that when a war broke out they could choose to side with whichever power made them the largest offer : "by these means they have obtained what they now have." This was a not unfair reading of Charles Emmanuel's diplomacy during the War of the Austrian Succession. The suggestion that they might be invited to join in a general affirmation of the status quo in Italy therefore put them in what Rochford termed " a disagreeable Dilemma" ; they could not reject such a measure without arousing suspicions of "their own ambitious Designs" in Italy. Though the King of Sardinia had responded readily enough in sending orders for Marsan to consult with Keene in Madrid, Rochford feared that the Court of Turin

10. SP 92/59, f.145, Rochford to Holdernessee, 26 September 1751 ; *ibid.*, f.175, Rochford to Holdernessee, 6 October 1751 ; *ibid.*, f.138, Holdernessee to Rochford, 16 September 1751 O.S. ; *ibid.*, f.179, and BM Add MSS 32831, f.18, Rochford to Holdernessee, 13 October 1751. See also Lodge, "Sir Benjamin Keene . . ." pp.20-21.

11. Nassau Papers, D/92, Rochford to Albemarle, 10 November 1751.

would "do all they can to traverse this negotiation," and in this they would not lack encouragement from France.¹²

For a month after this first exchange, all remained quiet at Turin, for no detailed talks could begin until the text of the treaty proposals was available for study. Rochford had recovered from the boil on his leg by 5 October, but he had to wait until 26 October for the arrival of Turner the messenger from London with a copy of the original Austrian project, the amendments to admit Britain and Savoy-Sardinia, and a fresh set of instructions from Holdernessee.¹³

Rochford was now to present the treaty project, and to invite the concurrence of the King of Sardinia either as a contracting or acceding party under British mediation. He was also to press for full powers to be sent immediately to Marsan at Madrid, enabling him to sign with Keene the amended treaty including Britain and Savoy-Sardinia, or simply to accede if Spain and Austria had already signed alone.

The pervading tone of these fresh instructions was one of bouyant optimism : "they ought, if they see their own Advantage, most heartily to join His Majesty's present Measures." There were, however, one or two anxicus notes. Rochford's earlier reports of Ossorio's cool reception and the reasons for reluctance on the part of the King of Sardinia had been echoed by the Sardinian Envoy in London, and Holdernessee feared that further problems might arise at Turin : "I own I do not like these Refinements ; they look like

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12. Nassau Papers, D/90, Rochford to Keene, 22 October 1751. See also E. Rota, Le Origini del Risorgimento, p.249, note 22, quoting from Bogino to Christiani, 19 February 1752, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, O/218, Supp., f.74, confirming Rochford's view of their initial dilemma.
 13. SP 92/59, f.175, Rochford to Holdernessee, 6 October 1751 ; *ibid.*, f.181, Rochford to Holdernessee, 30 October 1751.

a kind of Defaite or at best an Inclination to create Difficulties where in reality there are none." He also observed that Vienna had so far made no sign of welcoming the inclusion of Turin. ¹⁴

The day on which the treaty project arrived Rochford devoted to studying this unusually thick package of dispatches, and he did not see Ossorio until the afternoon of the following day, 27 October. He began the interview cautiously, reading out passages from Holdernessee's letters which spoke of George II's solicitude for the interests of the King of Sardinia, but Ossorio interrupted and said with a smile that Rochford need not resort to rhetoric to establish what everyone took for granted. Taking the hint, Rochford went straight to the point, revealed the treaty project, and made Britain's formal invitation for the King of Sardinia to join the treaty under her mediation. ¹⁵

He was then startled to discover that Ossorio already had his own copy of the project, sent to him from Madrid, and that the minister had thoroughly mastered its contents. Ossorio then plunged into a lengthy discourse on the scheme proposed therein, which Rochford thought was "rather to blame than praise."

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14. SP 92/59, f.158, Holdernessee to Rochford, 3 October 1751, Separate ;
 ibid., f.161, Holdernessee to Rochford, 3 October 1751, Most Secret ;
 ibid., f.169, Holdernessee to Rochford, 4 October 1751.
15. The account which follows of Rochford's intensive activity over 27 - 29 October is derived from these detailed reports :
 SP 92/59, f.181, Rochford to Holdernessee, 30 October 1751 ;
 ibid., f.183, Rochford to Holdernessee, 3 November 1751 ; BM Add Mss, 32831, f.292, and SP 92/59, f.186, Rochford to Holdernessee, 9 November 1751 ; Nassau Papers, D/91, Rochford to Keene, 9 November 1751 ; ibid., D/92, Rochford to Albemarle, 10 November 1751 ; BM Add MSS 32832, f.289, and SP 92/59, f.202, Rochford to Holdernessee, 10 November 1751 ; BM Add MSS 35472, f.43, and Nassau Papers, D/95, Rochford to Keith, 24 November 1751.

Ossorio agreed that it was a laudable object to drive a wedge between France and Spain, and detach Spain from French influence, but he strongly doubted if the present project effectively secured that end. As for securing the tranquility of Italy, he "flatly ridiculed it," charging that the number of troops to be furnished as 'succours' by the contracting parties would prove wholly inadequate. Rochford had earlier stressed that the present proposals committed the parties no farther than their existing obligations under Aix-la-Chapelle ; if it were no more than that, Ossorio retorted, they might as well invite France to join too.

A more experienced negotiator would have disposed of this obvious red-herring with wit or ridicule, but Rochford took it up in all seriousness, and laboured to convince Ossorio that the present treaty was designed to exclude any future possibility of French interference in Italy. France was more likely to do all in her power to wreck the negotiation, and Rochford suggested that Chetardie had already embarked on this task at Turin. Ossorio promptly denied that the French ambassador had even mentioned the matter to him. Rochford found this impossible to believe, but could not contradict the minister to his face without risking insult, so he switched attention back to the text of the treaty proposals, and the amendments to the mutual guarantee which would accommodate Britain and Savoy-Sardinia. But Rochford could not induce Ossorio to discuss them in detail ; the minister merely observed that they seemed to be the same as the papers he had received from Marsan, and ended the interview with an assurance that Rochford would soon have an answer to his proposition.

On the following day, 28 October, Charles Emmanuel came in from his country retreat at Venaria to discuss the British invitation with his Council. Rochford went to see Ossorio that afternoon, but no decision had been reached and there was no answer yet. Rochford found Ossorio a little less peevish than he had been the day before, and managed to draw the minister into further discussion of the proposals. At first they ranged over much the same ground as before, with similar comments from Ossorio. But then the minister observed that the Court of Vienna seemed likely to raise objections to the inclusion of Turin, and complained that Vienna had not so much as informed them of the negotiation at Madrid, much less invited them to join it. Rochford endeavoured to conceal his alarm at this reminder of the deep suspicion and mistrust which prevailed between Turin and Vienna, and smoothed over Vienna's reserve as best he could, suggesting that the talks at Madrid had purposely been kept very secret at first for fear of French interference. Ossorio remained disgruntled and unmoved.

More than a little anxious now at Ossorio's continued coolness, Rochford obtained an audience with the King himself at Venaria on 29 October, and was somewhat reassured by the many "obliging Expressions" he made of his appreciation for Britain's interest in his welfare. But the King showed no enthusiasm for the proposed treaty. He repeated all of Ossorio's objections, and added one of his own, that the preamble seemed a trifle strong, more like an offensive alliance than an affirmation of peace. This made him apprehensive of alarming his neighbours. Rochford had no time to make an effective answer to this objection, as the King rose to attend mass in the Royal Chapel.

When Rochford emerged from this audience, he found one of his own domestic servants waiting in the ante-chamber with a letter from Madrid. The letter had been delivered to Rochford's Turin house just after his coach had set out for Venaria that morning. Lady Rochford, thinking it might contain important news, immediately ordered the servant to ride out after Rochford.

Lucy's instinct was correct : the letter was from the British ambassador at Madrid, Benjamin Keene, and his news was of the utmost importance. Spain and Austria had declared their objection to including Britain in the treaty, on the grounds that Britain had no territories in Italy and therefore if included would give France an ample pretext to demand her inclusion as well. Newcastle had therefore reluctantly directed Keene to withdraw Britain's bid to join, and her offer of a Mediterranean squadron, but insisted all the more strongly that Savoy-Sardinia should be included as a full contracting party.

Rochford apparently could not bear to keep such vital news until another formal audience. He waited impatiently at the door of the Royal Chapel, and as soon as the King of Sardinia emerged, pressed forward and whispered that he had just received important news from Madrid. When Rochford had finished relating the gist of Keene's letter, the King merely smiled and replied, "J'entrerais comme l'Angleterre entrera," before continuing on his way. It was a suitably enigmatic comment for such an impetuous communication, but it was the first sign Rochford had seen that the Court of Turin was prepared to join the treaty at all.

Two days after this encounter, on Sunday 31 October, when Rochford was again at Venaria for a weekend of hunting, he was summoned to the King's private apartment. There, in what

Rochford noticed was "a gayer humour than I had seen him for some time," the King informed him that the news from Madrid had so changed the situation that their prepared answer would now have to be altered. But he assured Rochford that he would find their answer perfectly satisfactory.

Turin's position was now in fact considerably easier. Britain's original offer had indeed pinned the King and his ministers on the horns of a dilemma, for while such an invitation could not decently be refused without arousing suspicion and hostility on all sides, to accept as Britain's partner would have tied the Court of Turin in advance to whatever terms Britain deemed best for them. But now that Britain was no longer a contracting party, and merely a friendly mediator, the King of Sardinia saw some advantage in joining as a full contracting power in his own right, since besides obtaining a guarantee for all his present possessions, this would bring valuable recognition of his equality as a crowned head from the Courts of Madrid and Vienna.

Rochford again went hunting with the King on 3 November, but though their conversation was very affable, no mention was made of the treaty. On the other hand, Rochford noticed that the Council met almost daily, at which it was rumoured the discussions were very heated. The fact that an answer had been prepared though not at once presented to Rochford, and that this now had to be amended, suggests that the King and his ministers had initially decided to take the risk of rejecting Britain's offer, but had been naturally reluctant to declare themselves. Now the arguments for joining alone had to be debated.

At last, on Monday 8 November, after a week of suspense, Ossorio gave Rochford the answer of the Court of Turin to Britain's mediatory invitation to join the treaty being negotiated at Madrid. The King of Sardinia was willing to join as a full contracting party, and the necessary powers had been sent to Marsan to sign the treaty once the other powers had agreed on the alterations which would admit the Court of Turin. The most essential of these, apart from the agreement to supply a similar number of troops as 'succours' in the event of an invasion of Italy, was to extend the general guarantee to include Savoy, Nice, and the island of Sardinia. The initiative now rested with Spain and Austria, whether they would agree to embrace the Court of Turin, or proceed with the original project and sign alone. 16

After this busy time, during which, as he boasted to Albemarle, "my Instructions never slept a day," Rochford could congratulate himself on having fulfilled his appointed task to the letter. While it is obvious that the decision of the Court of Turin stemmed largely from their hopes for recognition as an equal to the great powers, the Spanish ambassador, de Sada, thought this a remarkable departure from their traditional policy of non-alignment : he was personally convinced that Rochford's energetic representations had greatly contributed to overcoming their initial reluctance. 17

The remainder of November and most of December passed very quietly at Turin. Ossorio was immobilized by a severe cold for several weeks, and only once gave Rochford some alarm by

16. SP 92/59, f.202, Rochford to Holderness, 10 November 1751.

17. Nassau Papers, D/92, Rochford to Albemarle, 10 November 1751 ; SP 92/59, f.224, Rochford to Holderness, 22 December 1751.

letting drop the extent to which the Secretary of State in London had revealed the contents of Rochford's early reports to the Sardinian envoy, Perron. Early in December, however, Rochford received praise from two quarters. Keene wrote to thank him for his "clear and judicious" account of Turin's first reaction to the treaty proposals, and Holdernessee informed Rochford that his work thus far at Turin had George II's "full approbation." ¹⁸

Nevertheless, the closing months of 1751 caused Rochford much anxiety, from his fear of French interference in the matter. Rochford had been watching the French ambassador's movements closely, and was disturbed to find that in addition to his normal weekly interviews with Ossorio, Chetardie had twice visited the minister at six in the evening, a time at which Ossorio would never receive a foreign minister except on very urgent business. The Spanish ambassador told Rochford he was certain Chetardie was asking questions, but Ossorio steadfastly denied this whenever Rochford gently sounded him about it. Rochford was troubled by the "great tranquility" which Chetardie evinced after these evening visits, and his blithe departure to enjoy the fair at Alessandria even before the Court of Turin had made its reply to Rochford. ¹⁹

Early in 1752 Rochford had another cause for alarm when Chavigny, the French ambassador to Venice, stopped at Turin for several days on his way home to Paris on leave, and spent much of his time closeted with the King of Sardinia's ministers. This time,

18. SP 92/59, f.216, Rochford to Holdernessee, 1 December 1751 ; *ibid.*, f.207, Holdernessee to Rochford, 14 November 1751 ; *ibid.*, f.219, Rochford to Holdernessee, 8 December 1751 ; BM Add MSS 43426, f.111, copy, Keene to Rochford, 22 November 1751.

19. SP 92/59, f.196, Rochford to Holdernessee, 9 November 1751, Separate and Very Secret ; Nassau Papers, D/92, Rochford to Albemarle, 10 November 1751.

when Rochford approached him, Ossorio readily admitted that the visiting Frenchman had tried very hard to get them to talk about the negotiation, but that they had given nothing away, and on the contrary, it was he who was "sifted." Rochford nevertheless wrote to Albemarle at Paris asking him to listen for any boasts Chavigny might make on his arrival of discoveries at Turin. This close attention to Chavigny's visit in fact anticipated instructions from Holdernessee to watch him ; the letter was penned in London even as Chavigny left Turin. ²⁰

Yet another scare, the arrival of a special courier from Paris on 19 January 1752 which was cloaked in secrecy for three anxious weeks, turned out to be a false alarm : he carried routine dispatches from Marsan, sent by way of Paris. Ossorio evidently delighted in Rochford's agonized enquiries about this mysterious courier. ²¹ Yet as late as 8 February, at a Court Ball, the King assured Rochford that he was sure France remained ignorant of the actual terms and state of the negotiation, all her efforts to sound the participants having failed utterly. ²²

A much greater danger to the negotiation than possible French interference, however, was the attitude adopted by the Court of Vienna. Charles Emmanuel III had every reason to be apprehensive of difficulties from this quarter. Spain's friendship was assured ; both Ferdinand VI and his first minister Carvajal

20. SP 92/60, f.14 and f.18, Rochford to Holdernessee, 5 and 12 January 1752 ; Nassau Papers, D/99, Rochford to Albemarle, 8 January 1752 ; SP 92/60, f.274, Holdernessee to Rochford, 9 January 1752.

21. BM Add MSS 32833, f.304, and SP 92/60, f.51, Rochford to Holdernessee, 26 January 1752 ; SP 92/60, f.279, Holdernessee to Rochford, 13 February 1752 ; *ibid.*, f.90, Rochford to Holdernessee, 8 March 1752.

22. SP 92/60, f.68, Rochford to Holdernessee, 9 February 1752.

were warmly pro-Sardinian, especially since the marriage of the Duke of Savoy to the Spanish Infanta in 1750. Partly thanks to Keene's promptings, the Court of Madrid readily welcomed the inclusion of Savoy-Sardinia as a full partner in the proposed treaty, as the extension of the general guarantee to Savoy would help to deter France from further Italian adventures. ²³

But at Vienna there was unmistakable reluctance to admit the King of Sardinia. Week after week went by, and the old year gave-way to the new, yet at the end of January 1752 there was still no communication whatever from Vienna to the Court of Turin. Rochford was especially anxious that the Austrian chargé at Turin, du Beyne, had maintained a stony silence on a topic which formed the mainstay of gossip within the diplomatic corps. He refused even to discuss the matter with Rochford, protesting that he was totally uninformed on the matter. Ossorio was also convinced that Vienna had no wish to include Turin, partly out of resentment that the invitation had been made through Britain's mediation, and hence no formal approach had been made at Vienna. He expected that Kaunitz would instruct Esterhazy to proceed with the original plan, and sign with Spain alone. This prospect did not seem to worry Ossorio unduly ; he laughed at Rochford's concern, and remarked "the whole of this affair is so much a Comedy to me that I long to see the dénouement." ²⁴

23. BM Add MSS 43426, f.111, Keene to Rochford, 22 November 1751 ; Lodge, "Sir Benjamin Keene . . ." pp.18, 20-21.

24. SP 92/59, f.224, Rochford to Holderness, 22 December 1751, Separate ; SP 92/60, f.18, Rochford to Holderness, 12 January 1751 ; SP 92/60, f.48, Rochford to Holderness, 19 January 1752, Separate.

While Ossorio could perhaps afford to be light-hearted at this possibility, the British government regarded it as a serious danger, so much so that Rochford was given fresh instructions to prevent the signing of a treaty between Spain and Austria alone, excluding Savoy-Sardinia. The danger from a limited agreement such as this was the likelihood of Italy's being thus divided into two camps, between those states comprehended in the guarantee, notably Milan, Parma, Tuscany and Naples, and those left outside it, notably Venice, Modena, and Savoy-Sardinia. France would immediately attempt to exploit such a division, and what might have been a salutary measure would be "unfortunately changed into a Source of Mischief." So ran Newcastle's reasoning, relayed by Holdernessee. A similar danger also arose if Spain offered Turin a separate treaty between themselves alone, relating only to the Bourbon possessions in Italy ; this would only deepen Vienna's fears for Milan and Piacenza. Rochford's fresh task was therefore to recommend moderation and patience to the King of Sardinia, in "so very nice & critical a Step." Above all, Rochford was to dissuade him from signing any separate treaty with Spain alone, and encourage him to act only in consultation with the British government, as their friend and well-disposed mediator. ²⁵

Rochford once again promptly fulfilled his instructions to the very letter. He saw Ossorio on 2 February, and asked that orders be sent to Marsan at Madrid to take no step without first consulting with the British ambassador. Ossorio's response was, Rochford thought, carping and evasive, complaining that Britain had dragged them into this negotiation against their will, and now

25. SP 92/60, f.274, Holdernessee to Rochford, 9 January 1752.

had withdrawn, leaving them too deeply involved to bow out themselves. After a lengthy discourse on this theme, Ossorio lapsed into silence without having actually answered Rochford's request. Rochford had to break the silence to press his request "in a very strong manner," before Ossorio finally agreed, with a show of reluctance, to send the necessary orders to Madrid.²⁶

Though on this occasion he had been compelled to press hard to gain his point, Rochford could still claim, as he did in letters to fellow British ministers in Germany, that the negotiation at his end was progressing as well as could be expected ; he was at least fulfilling his instructions, despite having "met with some Rubs."²⁷ The risk of a separate treaty between Turin and Madrid seemed overcome for the meantime, but Rochford's main source of anxiety was the long delay in hearing any response from Vienna to the King of Sardinia's bid to join the treaty. Du Beyne still maintained complete and utter silence on the matter.²⁸

At long last, on 16 February 1752, a courier arrived at Turin with the Austrian response to the approach made almost three months before. Ossorio had promised to inform Rochford immediately he had word from Vienna, but after several days had passed, Rochford was obliged to visit Ossorio himself, and ask whether the news was favourable or not. Ossorio guardedly replied that the Court of Vienna seemed pleased that Turin wanted to confer on the future tranquility of Italy. Exasperated, Rochford finally demanded to know, whether or not Vienna was willing to include

26. SP 92/60, f.58, and BM Add MSS 32833, f.330, Rochford to Holderness, 2 February 1752.

27. Nassau Papers, D/103, Rochford to Guy Dickens, 9 February 1752 ; *ibid.*, D/104, Rochford to Hanbury Williams, 12 February 1752.

28. SP 92/60, f.76, Rochford to Holderness, 16 February 1752, Separate.

Turin in the treaty project as a contracting party. Ossorio merely said they had. Vastly relieved, Rochford asked what possible obstacle now stood in the way of an early signing. After some demur, Ossorio admitted that a difficulty had been raised at Vienna over the inclusion of the island of Sardinia in the general guarantee.

At this moment, they were interrupted by another minister who had an appointment with Ossorio at that hour, and Rochford could not persuade Ossorio to see him later that day. The next morning, however, Rochford took up their conversation where it had been interrupted, and asked whether or not Vienna had given their ambassador at Madrid the necessary powers to negotiate a final solution on the spot, enabling the treaty to be signed without delay. Ossorio hesitated before assuring Rochford that they had, but quickly went on to say that there could be no serious difficulty over the guarantee for Sardinia since Vienna had already given the King of Sardinia a general guarantee of all his dominions in the Treaty of Worms. Rochford thought that Ossorio seemed unsure of himself in these two interviews, and wondered if he were hiding something from him. With such evident mistrust between Turin and Vienna, Rochford gloomily resigned himself to seeing many more couriers trotting to and fro before the business was finally settled.²⁹

This foreboding that Ossorio was concealing bad news proved to be true when on 29 February Rochford received a letter from Keene, describing the serious difficulties which had arisen at Madrid. Knowing that Vienna might object to the inclusion of

29. SP 92/60, f.80, and BM Add MSS 32834, f.100, Rochford to Holderness, 23 February 1752, Separate.

the island of Sardinia in the general guarantee, on the very reasonable pretext that as she had no navy she could not possibly defend it, the Spanish minister Carvajal had omitted Sardinia from the revised project he gave to Esterhazy to send back to Vienna. The guarantee had been thus confined to "el continente de Italia." Marsan felt bound by his original instructions, that the guarantee must include all possessions of the King of Sardinia, and said he could not possibly sign Carvajal's revised project, even though Vienna had accepted it.

Equally serious was the difficulty which had arisen over the alternat, the customary privilege in treaties between equals that each party should sign first on alternate copies of the final treaty. Esterhazy had been ordered from Vienna not to sign with Marsan as an equal without at the same time making a formal Declaration that this was not to be taken as a precedent. The Empress Maria Theresa regarded the Sardinian as a "mushroom crown," which moreover she deeply distrusted after the King of Sardinia's treacherous negotiations with France at the end of 1745.³⁰

Marsan's urgent appeal for fresh instructions arrived at Turin in the same post as Keene's letter to Rochford, and provoked a Council of the King and his ministers on 1 March 1752.³¹ Rochford waited outside, and when the Council adjourned for dinner, Ossorio stayed to talk, "very ready and desirous to confer." He was

30. BM Add MSS 43426, f.187, copy, Keene to Rochford, 17 February 1752 ; Lodge, "Sir Benjamin Keene . . .," p.21. On the alternat, see Horn, British Diplomatic Service, pp.204-5.

31. SP 92/60, f.85, Rochford to Holderness, 1 March 1752.

visibly anxious about the omission of Sardinia from the general guarantee, despite Rochford's assurances that an attack on the island was most unlikely while Britain remained an ally to the King of Sardinia and could send a fleet to protect it. Ossorio also raised a new problem which Rochford had not heard of before. As the project now stood, Turin had promised troops for the defence of the other acceding Italian states. But the Emperor, as Grand Duke of Tuscany, while he too had promised 'succours' to these states, had not as yet extended any to the Court of Turin. Ossorio termed this the "greatest piece of injustice conceivable." As for the alternat, Ossorio exclaimed "with some warmth" that they would not sign without it, nor would they tolerate any sort of modifying Declaration. Spain had readily granted the alternat when signing the treaty for the marriage of the Duke of Savoy in 1750, and Ossorio therefore could not imagine any good reason for Vienna to refuse it. ³²

Three major difficulties had arisen : the omission of Sardinia from the guarantee ; the reluctance of Vienna to concede Turin the alternat ; and the problem of 'succours' from Tuscany. The insistence of the Court of Turin on these three points was to demonstrate that beneath their affected indifference, the King and his ministers were now in fact fearful of being left out of the treaty altogether. Their honour was now so far committed that their exclusion would be a serious loss of face, and not merely a return to the status quo. In view of their initial reluctance under British mediation, it was now thought needful to convince Vienna of their willingness and sincerity for the treaty. ³³

32. SP 92/60, f.85, Rochford to Holderness, 1 March 1752.

33. SP 92/60, f.90, Rochford to Holderness, 8 March 1752.

Ossorio accordingly sent instructions to the Sardinian minister at Vienna, Count Canale, to pursue this new line without delay. But at Turin, Ossorio was troubled by the resolute silence of the Austrian chargé, du Beyne, who absolutely refused to discuss the treaty without instructions to do so.

Rochford here played a very useful part at Turin. Early in March 1752, Ossorio asked him if he could possibly speak privately to du Beyne, and convince him of the necessity to give his court a more favourable view of Turin's attitude to the treaty project. It is a striking testimony to Rochford's interest in the negotiation and his personal initiative that he had perceived this need and had already acted upon it.

Before 5 March, Rochford had visited du Beyne at his house, and in the course of general conversation had succeeded in drawing him out on the treaty negotiations for the very first time. Hearing du Beyne remark that Ossorio had kept him well-informed, and that nobody could have been more open and honest, Rochford urged du Beyne to mention this in the very same words in his next dispatch to Vienna, as this would greatly help to thaw the coolness between the two courts which seemed to be the cause of so many delays. Du Beyne had agreed to do this. ³⁴

In this conversation, du Beyne also made an important observation, in confidence, which Rochford passed on to Keene privately but was careful not to mention in any official letters to London. Du Beyne hinted that he thought Vienna would ultimately concede all that Turin asked, but because they distrusted the King of Sardinia's motives, they would first test his sincerity. ³⁵

34. SP 92/60, f.90, Rochford to Holderness, 8 March 1752.

35. Nassau Papers, D/109, Rochford to Keene, 5 March 1752.

In response to Ossorio's plea, Rochford went to see du Beyne again about 14 March, and discussed more fully the major difficulties which had arisen over the guarantee of Sardinia, the alternat, and the 'succours' from Tuscany. Du Beyne readily agreed that as Turin had offered troops for the defence of Tuscany, the Emperor could not refuse to reciprocate, and he assured Rochford that it was more likely a simple oversight than a deliberate neglect. As for the guarantee of Sardinia, du Beyne told Rochford that when Carvajal's amended project arrived at Vienna, this omission was not only noticed but immediately notified to Canale. Rochford noticed that du Beyne made "much merit" of this friendly act. Throughout their discussion, Rochford claimed, he "laboured much" to persuade du Beyne to give his court a favourable impression of Turin's sincerity, and was confident that he had done so with some success ; "what I say has some weight with him, as he knows I am not apt to be Credulous." ³⁶

Even as Rochford was assisting the Court of Turin to improve its reputation at Vienna, signs appeared that a similar operation might be needed at London. Holdernessee had recently informed Rochford that George II saw Turin's desire to include Sardinia in the guarantee as perfectly reasonable and deserving of Britain's fullest support. ³⁷

But his next dispatches evinced uneasiness that if Turin insisted on this point too strenuously, the whole negotiation might collapse. The fresh difficulties over the alternat and the succours expected from Tuscany had caused George II "great concern,"

36. SP 92/60, f.96, and BM Add MSS 32834, f.286, Rochford to Holdernessee, 15 March 1752, Separate.

37. SP 92/60, f.281, Holdernessee to Rochford, 17 February 1752.

and Holdernesse himself employed unusually strong language in denouncing the "frivolous Pretences and evasive chicaning Objections" of the Court of Turin. Holdernesse protested that he had never before heard of any problem relating to Tuscany, assuming that these succours came under that offered by Vienna. As for the alternat, Holdernesse observed sourly that the King of Sardinia ought to be more grateful that the great powers were so ready to devise any means by which he could still retain his pretensions to equality. In short, Rochford was to adopt a firm tone, and warn the Court of Turin that they should accept the project as it stood and sign without delay. ³⁸

Rochford already knew that the omission of Sardinia from the guarantee was no longer a serious obstacle. When he reminded Ossorio in mid-March that since the omission was Carvajal's error, any obstinacy over it was more likely to offend Spain than Austria, Ossorio replied that he would always avoid offending Spain, but he had recently been assured from both sides that Sardinia would be reinstated in the guarantee. The two remaining difficulties, over the alternat, and Tuscany, Ossorio declared were much more serious. He told Rochford that while they would never "stick at trifles," they would be very stubborn over essentials. ³⁹

At this juncture, matters seemed more promising than they had been for some time, and Rochford doubtless felt gratified that he had thus far succeeded in fulfilling each fresh instruction sent from London. His perplexity and resentment on the morning of 5 April may therefore be imagined when he opened a letter from

38. SP 92/60, f.283, Holdernesse to Rochford, 24 February 1752 O.S. ; *ibid.*, f.287, and BM Add MSS 32834, f.171, Holdernesse to Rochford, 5 March 1752 O.S.

39. SP 92/60, f.96, Rochford to Holdernesse, 15 March 1752, Separate ; *ibid.*, f.101, and BM Add MSS 32834, f.281, Rochford to Holdernesse, 22 March 1752.

Holdernessee which contained two distinct rebukes, the very first of Rochford's diplomatic career.

Holdernessee first expressed surprise that "it should never have occurred" to Rochford that Carvajal's error in omitting Sardinia from the revised project meant that it was Madrid rather than Vienna who would be offended by Turin's insistence on this point. Secondly, Holdernessee was even more surprised that Rochford had apparently made no use of his instructions of 9 January to press Ossorio to take no step unless in close consultation with the British government.⁴⁰

This letter arrived in the same post as Holdernessee's latest instructions of 5 March, and by the time they had been deciphered, Rochford was in the act of signing a routine dispatch with nothing new to report. There was no time to draft a full letter, and rather than miss that week's post, Rochford added a hasty postscript to his routine report.

The first rebuke was understandable, though quite undeserved, because Rochford's report of 22 March describing his reminder to Ossorio about Carvajal's error and the risk of offending Spain, had left Turin only a day before Holdernessee's rebuke left London. But the second rebuke raises serious doubts concerning the attentiveness with which Holdernessee studied Rochford's reports. As Rochford tersely pointed out, his report of 2 February, which had long since arrived in London, related in detail the very full use Rochford had made of his 9 January instructions, and the pains he had taken to extract a promise from Ossorio not to sign any separate treaty with Spain alone.⁴¹

40. SP 92/60, f.293, Holdernessee to Rochford, 12 March 1752 O.S.

41. SP 92/60, f.108, Rochford to Holdernessee, 5 April 1752.

It was perhaps fortunate that at this precise juncture Rochford received directions to address his dispatches for the time being to Hanover, where Holdernessee's brother-Secretary Newcastle, the architect of Turin's inclusion in the treaty project, had accompanied George II on a visit. Rochford's first dispatch to Newcastle at Hanover was devoted to a long and detailed account of his interview with Ossorio on 6 April, in obedience to his latest instructions to adopt a firm tone and press Turin to drop their pretensions and sign the treaty without delay.

But it seemed as if Holdernessee's rebuke had soured Rochford's good fortune so far ; this time, he had to report total failure. He had made no impression whatever on Ossorio, who was ready with a quick answer to every argument Rochford put forward to show the necessity for Turin to yield. The central point of discussion was the alternat, and Turin's refusal to countenance the conditional Declaration which Vienna desired. Ossorio insisted that the alternat was essential to the dignity of the King of Sardinia, and could not be hedged about with conditions. Rochford could not recall having seen Ossorio so confident and resolute, and wondered if he had persuaded the King to stand firm on the grounds that whether they had Britain's support or not, they had little to lose and possibly much to gain by attempting to outstare the Court of Vienna.⁴²

This new resolute spirit was demonstrated conclusively only a few days later, when a courier arrived from Vienna with the very first sign of concession by that court : rather than a

f.114,
42. BM Add MSS 32834, f.313, and SP 92/60, /Rochford to Newcastle, 8 April 1752.

formal Declaration, Vienna was willing to concede Turin the alternat with a milder form of Reservation which need not be made public. This was a slight but definite improvement, but all Rochford's labours to persuade Ossorio to sign on these terms proved fruitless. Ossorio merely reminded Rochford that Vienna had still said nothing of the succours from Tuscany, nor made anything more than a vague assurance as to the guarantee of Sardinia. They must have the alternat unconditionally or not at all, and if Vienna did not concede these points, then Marsan would abide by his original instructions and stand aside while Spain and Austria signed alone. Rochford could make no impression on Ossorio's narrow logic : "si on doute notre sincérité, on n'a que nous attrapper en nous accordant ce que nous demandons, et on verra alors, si nous sommes sincères ou non." ⁴³

Notwithstanding this brave show of determination, the King of Sardinia knew that the negotiation might well founder unless he made a gesture of concession himself. Since his one brief comment at the Ball in February, the King had carefully avoided any discussion of the treaty with Rochford, even though Rochford attended court regularly ; "there seldom passes a Day that I miss going thither." The fact that the King left all the talking to Ossorio, Rochford took as proof that "they look on this as one of the most delicate as well as most difficult Affairs they have ever had to treat of with Us." ⁴⁴

But the King broke his silence to Rochford and du Beyne on 27 April, to make a vital suggestion regarding the guarantee of Sardinia : since Vienna had no navy, she had only to provide the

43. BM Add MSS 32835, f.132, and SP 92/60, f.127, Rochford to Newcastle, 26 April 1752.

44. BM Add MSS 32835, f.46, and SP 92/60, f.121, Rochford to Newcastle, 15 April 1752.

troops and the Court of Turin would find the ships to transport them to the island.⁴⁵

This important concession had been prompted by the quickening of events at Madrid, which Keene later explained in detail in a letter to Rochford. Esterhazy's patience had worn so thin that he had finally drafted two treaties, one based on the original project between Madrid and Vienna alone, and the second including Turin on Vienna's terms. He had given Marsan an ultimatum, that unless he signed the second project by 10 April, he and Carvajal would proceed alone and sign the first one. Marsan was almost frantic with desperation at this ; he could not possibly sign the existing project for his instructions bound him to insist on Turin's terms, nor could he hope to obtain fresh guidance from his court before the deadline. Esterhazy and Carvajal had therefore signed their separate treaty alone, much to Keene's despair. But Carvajal had left the door open with a proviso that if agreement could be reached soon enough between Turin and Vienna, this first treaty would be destroyed and forgotten upon the signing of a new tripartite one. As a step in this direction, Vienna had agreed to include Sardinia in the guarantee, and offered her slight concession over the alternat. Now that the King of Sardinia had solved the practical problem of conveying Vienna's troops to the island, there remained only the problems of Tuscany and the alternat to be settled. Keene fervently wished an end to "these littlenesses."⁴⁶

45. BM Add MSS 32835, f.178, and SP 92/60, f.149, Rochford to Newcastle, 29 April 1752.

46. British Museum, Stowe MSS, 256, f.125 (Phelps Papers), Keene to Rochford, 15 May 1752.

Newcastle doubted if any further concessions could be expected from Vienna, however, and believed the only hope for success now lay at Turin. In two long letters which Rochford received about 19 May, Newcastle urged him to return once more to the critical and essential task of persuading the King of Sardinia to drop his pretensions to the full alternat and to sign immediately on Vienna's latest terms. It was in fact Britain's last desperate attempt to browbeat the Court of Turin into a speedy settlement with Vienna.⁴⁷

In two long and exhausting interviews on 20 and 22 May, Rochford again laboured to convince Ossorio and the King himself that they should give way to Vienna over the alternat and the succours from Tuscany. He returned to all his previous arguments but met with the same stubborn refusal as before. The King was extremely affable, even paying tribute to Rochford's discretion and fair reportage throughout the whole tedious negotiation, but he refused to concede an inch regarding the alternat. Rochford had to admit defeat, and he bitterly observed in his report to Newcastle, "how jealous little Courts are to preserve their Honours," waging that if the obstacle were made public, "the whole nation would be unanimous, and ready to give ear, to what we might think more essential."⁴⁸

The tone of this dispatch reveals Rochford in the depths of despair and frustration, miserable and distressed that he had again failed utterly to fulfil his instruction. It was small comfort to know that he had received from Holderness, not quite

47. BM Add MSS 32835, fos.310-321 (not in SP), Newcastle to Rochford, 8 and 12 May 1752.

48. BM Add MSS 32836, f.182, and SP 92/60, f.173, Rochford to Newcastle, 27 May 1752.

an apology, but the nearest permissible thing from a Secretary of State, after his unwarranted rebuke of 12 March : a private testimony to "the Diligence which your Lordship constantly shews in the execution of the King's commands." ⁴⁹

Rochford's glum mood was not to last for long, however. The very next day after writing his confession of failure to Newcastle, on 28 May, the astonishing news arrived that Vienna had given way on all points, conceding Turin's demands regarding the guarantee of Sardinia, the succours from Tuscany, and above all the unconditional alternat. It was left to Spain to devise a modality for the alternat which would satisfy the King of Sardinia. Ossorio was at first a little anxious about this last point, in case some sort of condition was after all attached to the alternat, and his small demur on what was beyond doubt a resounding triumph for Turin so enraged du Beyne that Rochford had "no small trouble to quiet him." But it was generally understood that the negotiation was settled at last, and orders were sent to Madrid enabling Marsan to sign a treaty embodying the new concessions. ⁵⁰

Rochford immediately wrote to congratulate Keene at Madrid on the successful conclusion of their troublesome negotiation and confessed himself at a loss to explain "how this fond fit" came to seize the Courts of Madrid and Vienna. He was relieved to see it ended, but rather wished that Britain's role had been more effective, "after all the zeal we have shewn for the success of this affair." ⁵¹

49. SP 92/60, f.298, Holdernessee to Rochford, 2 April 1752, Private.

50. BM Add MSS 32836, f.237, and SP 92/60, f.182, Rochford to Newcastle, 2 June 1752 ; Nassau Papers, D/116, Rochford to Albemarle, 10 June 1752.

51. Nassau Papers, D/115, Rochford to Keene, 1 June 1752.

In the Valentino Gardens a week later, the King of Sardinia held a long conversation with Rochford about what he chose to call "this curious Treaty, which had given more trouble than a ten times more important one." Rochford was amused to hear the King blame Vienna for the delays and uncertainties, but he thought it unfair for the King to blame Marsan as well, saying that a more consummate diplomat would not have been constantly sending back to Turin for fresh instructions on every little point. This had undoubtedly added enormously to the delay, but Rochford thought Marsan's caution very proper, and doubted if his orders were particularly clear from the start. Rochford also wondered whether the delays were inherent in the diplomatic game ; "Negotiators, who are like Jews in that particular, . . . love to haggle to the last moment." 52

The definitive Treaty of Aranjuez was signed on 14 June 1752, and the news of this event caused much jubilation when it reached Turin on Sunday 28 June. The young Duke of Savoy told Rochford that he was pleased because it was obvious that Turin was the only one who really gained by this treaty. Certainly, quite apart from the various guarantees, the prestige of being granted the alternat by such great powers as Spain and Austria constituted a major diplomatic triumph for the King of Sardinia. But the Duke would have been dismayed had he known what some of the diplomatic corps suspected : in fact, Vienna had induced Madrid to exchange a secret article assuring each other that this alternat would not be regarded as a binding precedent. 53

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52. BM Add MSS 32836, f.361, Rochford to Newcastle, 10 June 1752 ; Nassau Papers, D/117, Rochford to Villettes, 14 June 1752.
53. BM Add MSS 32837, f.250, Rochford to Newcastle, 1 July 1752 ; Lodge, "Sir Benjamin Keene . . ." pp.24-25. The text of Aranjuez is printed in the Recueil des traités publics de la Maison de Savoie, edited by Comte Solar de Marguerite (Turin, 1836-1861), III, 128-137.

Rochford saw his own small contribution to the success of the negotiation, apart from having retained the confidence of the Court of Turin throughout, in his private intervention with the Austrian minister, du Beyne. Both Newcastle and Ossorio separately endorsed this modest self-appraisal. Newcastle wrote stressing that Aranjuez had been an important measure for the future stability of Italy, and praised Rochford warmly for his efforts at Turin with Ossorio and du Beyne : "by which you have been enabled to be of great service in this Negotiation." On 7 July, Ossorio personally thanked Rochford for the trouble he had taken to persuade du Beyne to send Vienna more favourable reports of their intentions, "which, he said, he knew had been of great service." ⁵⁴

Contemporaries tended to agree with Newcastle, and hail the Treaty of Aranjuez as a significant and reassuring affirmation of Aix-la-Chapelle, and a harbinger of peace for Italy. But in reality, it proved to be little more than a gesture, for the other most important Italian state invited to accede never did so. The Bourbon King of Naples saw Aranjuez as an unwarranted interference in his plans to dispose of the succession at Naples as he pleased when he himself succeeded to the Spanish throne, and the guarantees stipulated in the new treaty cut across his claims on certain districts in Tuscany. Underneath these ostensible objections, however, lay a deep personal hatred for the upstart Sardinian King : he would never merely accede to a treaty which his arch-enemy had signed as a full contracting party. ⁵⁵

54. BM Add MSS 32836, f.237, and SP 92/60, f.182, Rochford to Newcastle, 2 June 1752 ; Nassau Papers, D/115, Rochford to Keene, 1 June 1752 ; BM Add MSS 32837, f.54, Newcastle to Rochford, 19 June 1752 ; BM Add MSS 32838, f.60, SP 92/60, f.208, Rochford to Newcastle, 8 July 1752.

55. BM Add MSS 32837, f.250, and SP 92/60, f.203, Rochford to Newcastle, 1 July 1752 ; BM Add MSS 32838, f.182, and SP 92/60, f.210, Rochford to Newcastle, 15 July 1752. See also H. Acton, The Bourbons of Naples, 1734-1825 (London, 1956), pp.73-74.

Rochford was able to investigate for himself the reluctance of Naples to accede to the Treaty of Aranjuez when he made his tour of Italy in 1753. He found the King of Naples so strongly influenced by his francophile Secretary of State, Fogliani, that despite his "utter aversion to every Body that is french" [sic] the King was prepared to concur with them "in traversing the Treaty of Aranjuez as much as possible." ⁵⁶

Yet at the time, Newcastle could justifiably regard Aranjuez as something very close to that which he had hoped for ; a further peace settlement for Italy which included the King of Sardinia, largely thanks to Britain's initiative in widening the original project. But he also must have recognized that the negotiation had shown how very limited Britain's influence was at Turin when the King of Sardinia was determined to go his own way. It must have been as galling for Newcastle as it was for Rochford on the spot to find that their advice and warnings were politely ignored. Once Britain had withdrawn as a contracting power, and as soon as Turin had been accepted in her own right by Madrid and Vienna, Britain's influence on the negotiation, even as a friendly mediator, was severely restricted. The real triumphs of British mediation lay elsewhere than Turin ; at Madrid, where Keene laboured tirelessly to prevent a total breakdown, and in encouraging Vienna to yield at last.

Ironically, Aranjuez actually marked the end of active British intervention in Italian affairs for almost the remainder of the eighteenth century ; designed as a barrier to French interference, it proved equally effective in excluding Britain too. ⁵⁷

56. SP 92/61, f.93, Rochford to Holderness, 23 June 1753.

57. D.B. Horn, Great Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1967), p.341.

As for Newcastle's fond hope that Aranjuez might help to isolate France among the European powers, this doubtful effect of the treaty was rendered otiose within a very few years by the Diplomatic Revolution which preceded the outbreak of the Seven Years' War ; the Courts of Vienna and Versailles thereby became allies, and destroyed the Old System of Britain's continental policy which Newcastle had striven to maintain. ⁵⁸

Yet even as war-clouds gathered during 1755, Benjamin Keene noted that of all Britain's professed allies, the King of Sardinia stood "firm as a rock," and went on to remark ; "We now find the benefit of the Treaty made at Aranjuez about three years ago for the tranquility of Italy between Spain, the Empress, and Sardinia, which cost me more pains than all the business I ever did on our own accounts." ⁵⁹ Rochford might have smiled in sympathy at such a remark, having earlier marvelled himself at "the difficulties and delays I have found in an Affair that appeared to most of our Friends easy and short." ⁶⁰ But it had not been an entirely wasted effort for Rochford, for in this respect if in no other his interviews with Ossorio over the ten months of the negotiation had been a realistic and worthwhile apprenticeship in the arts of diplomacy.

58. It is noteworthy that Aranjuez was only a minor affair by comparison with Newcastle's great preoccupation in the 1750s, the plan for the Election of a King of the Romans ; on which most recently see R. Browning, "The Duke of Newcastle and the Imperial Election Plan, 1749-1754," Journal of British Studies, VII (1967), pp.28-47.

59. Keene to Castres, 7 July 1755, in The Private Correspondence of Benjamin Keene, edited by R. Lodge (Cambridge, 1933), p.415.

60. Nassau Papers, D/92, Rochford to Albemarle, 10 November 1751.

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- 182-184 swift journey from Turin ; Rochford's hopes for Paris ; George II insists on Rochford for Groom of the Stole ; also appointed first Lord of Bedchamber and member of Privy Council ; a loyal speech ; temporary Lord Justice.
- 184-186 Rochford's hopes for ministerial post disappointed ; Johnson's dedication ; attendance at Lords declines ; Rochford and Lucy in London society ; Garrick ; Horace Walpole's regard for Lucy ; the Maynards ; Rochford plays the guitar ; Cumberland and Prince Edward Augustus.
- 187-188 the Rochfords' intended separation 1758 ; Chesterfield's explanation ; an ingenious solution ; Rochford's other mistress ; Rochford adopts their daughter ; Casanova's comments on Lucy.
- 188-189 Rochford obtains a Court post for his brother Richard ; improvements to the Park at St Osyth ; relative isolation ; visitors and country recreations.
- 190-192 Rochford as Vice-Admiral of Essex ; a wreck of 1761 ; his appointment as Lord-Lieutenant ; helps form militia regiments ; Essex politics ; Rochford as leader of the Whig interest ; persuades Maynard to stand 1759.
- 192-193 Rochford hopes for a second diplomatic posting ; Bristol appointed to Madrid 1758 ; death of George II ; Rochford loses his Court offices ; cash settlement of perquisites ; pensioned and in the wilderness.
- 194-195 a return to diplomacy now financially a necessity ; war with Spain ; Gray a likelier choice ; Sandwich appointed on Cumberland's patronage ; Stormont named for Vienna ; Rochford's illness April 1763.
- 196-197 Sandwich relinquishes the Madrid embassy ; Rochford accepts it readily ; preparations for departure ; secretaries ; election business ; departure.
- 197 audience with Louis XV at Fontainebleau ; Rochford visits Sterne at Montpellier ; a grand reception at Barcelona ; arrival at Madrid.

English Intermezzo, 1755-1763

Rochford left Turin on the night of 11 February 1755, having sent his carriage ahead some days before to negotiate the snows of the Mont Cenis Pass.¹ With this headstart, he made the journey from Turin to London in record time, arriving at his house in Berkeley Square on 28 February.² Rochford's haste was quite understandable : his recall so soon after the death of Albemarle can only have suggested the Paris embassy. But in fact nobody was appointed to Paris for several years to come, and Rochford's recall had another reason. Albemarle had occupied a number of sinecure offices in addition to his embassy, notably the lucrative Court appointment of Groom of the Stole, which now lay vacant. George II expressed a decided personal preference for the fourth Earl of Rochford to succeed Albemarle in this important office, insisting on this choice even in the face of opposition from Newcastle and Hardwicke, who would have preferred to keep the post vacant as a tempting plum of patronage.³

The day after his arrival in London, Rochford presented himself at Court, and on the next day (2 March) he was appointed Groom of the Stole and given his keys of office.⁴ At this, Earl Poulett, the first Lord of the Bedchamber, resigned in a huff at seeing a junior Lord appointed to this coveted post ahead of him-

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1. SP 92/63, f.7, Rochford to Robinson, 29 January 1755 ; *ibid.*, f.11, Charles to Robinson, 12 February 1755.
 2. Collins, Peerage of England (1779), IV, 144 ; D.N.B., XXI, 1344.
 3. BM Add MSS 32737, f.516, Hardwicke to Newcastle, 29 December 1754 ; *ibid.*, 32852, f.27, Newcastle to Hardwicke, 2 January 1755 ; see the discussion in Riker, Henry Fox, 1st Lord Holland (1911), I, 232-7.
 4. Collins, Peerage, IV, 144 ; D.N.B., XXI, 1344. The appointment was noted (besides the Gazette) in the London Daily Advertiser, 3 March, and the London Magazine, XXIV (1755), 140.

self. Rochford was thereupon made first Lord of the Bedchamber in his place.⁵ A week later, Rochford was also sworn in as one of His Majesty's Privy Council.⁶ Altogether, his rewards for zeal and diligence at Turin were fairly ample.

Soon after taking the customary oaths for these new offices, in the House of Lords on 8 April,⁷ Rochford attempted to show his gratitude for these lavish favours by preparing a speech in denunciation of Poulett's ridiculous motion against George II's proposed trip to Hanover.⁸ Though there is no record that this speech was ever delivered in the Lords, its good intention may have impressed the King, for in the following week Rochford was included among the Lords Justices entrusted with the governance of the kingdom during the King's absence. However, Rochford was not one of the 'inner Cabinet' and it seems unlikely that he would have been consulted on matters of any importance.⁹

With these encouraging marks of royal favour, Rochford took care to be diligent in his attendance at the House of Lords, missing only a few days during March and April 1755.¹⁰ But his hopes for a ministerial post, as war with France loomed closer

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5. Horace Walpole, Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George II (London, 1822), I, 381.
 6. With Barrington, on 11 March ; London Magazine, XXIV (1755), 140 ; D.N.B., XXI, 1344.
 7. Journal of the House of Lords, XXVIII, 395.
 8. Rigby wrote to Bedford on 17 April 1755 ; "I heard last night that my friend Rochford had thought it incumbent upon him to answer him, and had got a speech of ridicule ready . ." Bedford Correspondence, edited by Lord John Russell (London, 1842-6), II, 160-162.
 9. Rochford's term as Lord Justice extended only from 28 April to 16 September 1755 ; Doyle, Official Baronage, III, 164. D.N.B., XXI, 1344. For the 'inner Cabinet,' see James 2nd Earl of Waldegrave, Memoirs, 1754-1758 (London, 1821), pp.45-6.
 10. Journal of the House of Lords, XXVIII, 350-412, passim.

after June 1755, were not to be realized. He was apparently not even mentioned in negotiations for successive changes in the ministry between December 1755 and October 1756,¹¹ and as late as June 1757, Rochford appears in one of Newcastle's notional lists of promotions only for a pension and not even for a minor office let alone a ministerial post.¹²

Yet Rochford was perhaps not the only one who thought he was about to assume a ministerial post at this time, as may be gathered from the flattering Dedication to him written by Samuel Johnson for a little book published early in 1756.¹³

As the realization dawned that he was not immediately destined for high office in an executive capacity, Rochford's attendance at the House of Lords fell off quite markedly. After 1755, and throughout his residence in England up to 1763, his attendance averaged no more than about ten per cent of sitting days. He was usually present for a few days in December, almost never in January, and very spasmodically between February and May each session.¹⁴

This quite casual attendance was not entirely owing to absence in the country, except perhaps during January, for with

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11. Walpole, Memoirs of . . . George II (1822), I, 482-3, II, 44, and II, 98-104. See also Walpole to Mann, 21 December 1755, and 29 November 1756, Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XX, 516-8, and XXI, 22-27.
 12. Rigby to Bedford, 18 June 1757, Bedford Correspondence, II, 251.
 13. William Payne, An Introduction to the Game of Draughts (London, 1756) ; British Museum, Department of Printed Books, 7907cc35(2). See also Boswell's Life of Johnson, edited by G.B. Pill, revised by L.F. Powell (Oxford, 1934), I, 317.
 14. See the Journal of the House of Lords, XXVIII(1753-56), and XXI (1756-60), passim. Rochford's attendance at the eight sessions from November 1755 to June 1763 ran as follows ; 1755-6, 25 days out of 98 ; 1756-7, 14/109 ; 1757-8, 19/96 ; 1758-9, 5/90 ; 1759-60, 18/90 ; 1760-61, 5/61 ; 1761-2, 4/90 ; 1762-3, 4/60.

his new rank at Court, Rochford easily assumed a prominent place in fashionable society. Only a few days after his appointment as Groom of the Stole, he and Lucy were to be seen dancing happily at a ball given by Lord Holderness. ¹⁵ In the following month, at White's Club, Rochford belied his reputation for extravagance with a very cautious wager against a raffle result. ¹⁶ Rochford's town house became a rendezvous for the renewal of old friendships, such as those with Rigby and Garrick, and the making of new ones, with Barrington, Holderness, and Sandwich. Garrick was now married and living at Twickenham, where the Rochfords dined with him in August 1755 in the company of Lady Holderness, the Duke of Grafton, the Spanish ambassador d'Abreu, and Garrick's neighbour Horace Walpole. ¹⁷

Indeed, were it not for Walpole, little would be known of the Rochfords' social life in these years, for despite his intense personal dislike for Rochford himself, Walpole seems to have cultivated their acquaintance solely for the sake of Lucy's witty and entertaining conversation. As early as March 1755 she had asked Walpole for a motto suitable to be engraved on a much-travelled ruby ring, ¹⁸ and in May that year the Rochfords dined with Walpole at his gothic mansion at Strawberry Hill, in the

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15. Horace Walpole to Bentley, 6 March 1755, Walpole's Letters, edited by Peter Cunningham (London, 1886), II, 426. (The Yale edition of Walpole's correspondence has not yet reached the Bentley letters.)
 16. "April ye 17th 1755. Ld Rochford wagers Mr Maxwell One hundred guineas, his No. against Mr Maxwell's in Hogarth's Raffle ; if neither have the prize, the bett is void." W.B. Boulton, The History of White's (London, 1892), II, 34.
 17. Garrick wrote of this company to Huntingdon, 23 August 1755 ; "they were very chearfull & made us happy." The Letters of David Garrick, edited by Little and Kahl (New York, 1963), I, 231-233. Compare Walpole's more cynical report to Bentley, 15 August 1755 ; Walpole's Letters, edited by Cunningham, II, 457.
 18. Walpole to Bentley, 27 March 1755 ; Walpole's Letters, edited by Cunningham, II, 429.

company of Lady Hervey.¹⁹ But the most convincing evidence of Walpole's regard for Lucy was given in the course of her visit to the printing press at Strawberry Hill in 1757, when Walpole revealed his attitude to her marriage in a few lines of type.²⁰

Older and closer friends were the Maynards of Walthamstow and Easton Lodge, Essex, with whom the Rochfords maintained a close and constant friendship. A description of a ball which they attended at Rochford's house in Berkeley Square also incidentally reveals one of Rochford's musical accomplishments : he entertained the company playing on a guitar.²¹ The company at Rochford's house that night was indeed illustrious. Besides the Maynards, Lord Huntingdon, Lord Waldegrave, and Horace Walpole's nieces, His Royal Highness Prince Edward Augustus was also present.²²

Nor was this the first time the Prince had graced the Rochford house with his presence. He had been introduced to their circle in February 1757 by his uncle, Rochford's patron, the Duke of Cumberland, in accordance with George II's wish that he should "see the world to learn something, for he can learn nothing at Home." Though he and his uncle were charmed by the singing of Lucy and Lady Essex at their entry, the Prince's mother doubted if he would learn much of value from the Rochfords.²³

19. Walpole to Montague, 13 May 1755 ; Walpole Correspondence, (Yale, 1937-), IX, 168.

20. Walpole to Montague, 25 August 1757 :

"The Press speaks :

In vain from your properest name you have flown,
And exchanged lovely Cupid's for Hymen's dull throne ;
By my art shall your beauties be constantly sung,
And in spite of yourself you shall ever be Young."

Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), IX, 215-6.

21. Walpole to Montague, 14 January 1760 ; Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), IX, 269.

22. Edward Augustus, Duke of York (1739-1767), younger brother of George III.

23. Rigby to Bedford, 7 February 1757 ; Bedford Correspondence (1842-6), II, 236-7. See also Walpole to Mann, 13 February 1757, Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XXI, 57.

With no children of their own, and apparently sure of their own relationship, Rochford and Lucy allowed each other considerable freedom to do as they pleased in the licentious society of their day. However, the Princess Augusta's comment had a ring of prophecy ; the Rochford marriage very nearly foundered in the middle of the following year, 1758. Lord Chesterfield explained the situation to his son in these terms :

"Your friend Lady Rochford is gone into the country with her Lord to negotiate, coolly and at leisure, their intended separation. My Lady insists upon my Lord's dismissing the [Banti] as ruinous to his fortune ; my Lord insists, in his turn, upon my Lady's dismissing Lord Thanet ; my Lady replies, that that is unreasonable, since Lord Thanet creates no expense to the family, but rather the contrary. My Lord confesses, that there is some weight in this argument, but then pleads sentiment ; my Lady says, a fiddlestick for sentiment after having been married so long . . ." ²⁴

This intended separation did not, however, take place. The solution was ingenious in the extreme, as Lucy's friend Lady Essex noted :

"Lord Rochford has left the Banti, and L^d Thanet has taken her into keeping, so L^d & L^y R. now live together quite comfortably." ²⁵

Nevertheless, Rochford before long found himself a less expensive mistress, one Martha Harrison, of the parish of St George's Hanover Square. Sometime before 1763 she bore Rochford a daughter,

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24. Chesterfield's Letters, edited by J. Bradshaw (London, 1892), III, 1231. Bradshaw has 'Battotte' instead of Banti. I am indebted to W.S. Lewis of Yale for sending me a photostat of p.420 of Horace Walpole's 1774 copy of these letters, with the names entered in the margin. The Banti was an Italian opera dancer who may have followed Rochford from Turin. She lived in Dean Street, Soho. On her, see Town and Country Magazine, London, II (1770), p.457. On Sackville Tufton, eighth Earl of Thanet, see The Complete Peerage, XII, i, 697.
25. Frances Hanbury Williams, Lady Essex, to ? , from Cashiobury, n.d. Hanbury Williams Correspondence, LXXXII, 146, in the collection of W.S. Lewis, Farmington, Connecticut, to whom I am indebted for this quotation.

who became known as Maria Nassau. In June 1763 Rochford set up a trust fund to give the mother and daughter each a regular income for life.²⁶ But by 1767, it would appear that Rochford and Lucy had adopted Maria as their own daughter, and brought her to live with them in Paris and later at St Osyth.²⁷

For her part, Lucy Rochford continued to lead a fairly free and unconventional life, to judge from the comment of an acknowledged authority on such matters, Jacques Casanova de Seingalt, in 1763 : "This Lady's gallantries were innumerable, and furnished a fresh topic of conversation every day."²⁸

In contrast, Rochford's brother Richard Savage Nassau and his wife Elizabeth, the dowager Duchess of Hamilton, appear to have been blessed with a quiet and uneventful marriage. They already had a son and daughter before Rochford returned from Turin, and a second son was born to them on 5 September 1756.²⁹ Rochford did not neglect his brother's interests at Court, and at the end of 1759 obtained his appointment as one of the Grooms of the Bedchamber on £ 500 a year.³⁰ Richard had been M.P. for Colchester since 1747, but he had not offered himself for re-election in 1754, preferring a quiet country life to the onerous and expensive business of politics.³¹

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26. Essex Record Office, D/DC r.T.1, Indenture and Demise, 1 June 1763. The trust was vested in Rochford's agent and attorney, William Field, and his friend John Montagu, fourth Earl of Sandwich.
 27. Mme du Deffand to Horace Walpole, 13 July 1767 ; Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), III, 325. Martha Harrison was still alive in 1778, when Rochford's Will of 4 June that year confirmed the 1763 Indenture; Public Record Office, London; Probate, 11/1083/481 ; copy in Essex Record Office, D/DCr, L.2.
 28. Casanova's Memoirs, translated by A. Machen (London, 1894; reprinted New York, 1959-60), V, 206.
 29. George Richard Savage Nassau (1756-1823), noted Suffolk antiquary ; D.N.B., XL, 119 ; Gentlemen's Magazine, XCIII (1823), pp.173-5.
 30. Journal of the House of Commons, XXXII, 525, 533. D.N.B., XXI, 1346.
 31. L. Namier and J. Brooke, The History of Parliament, The House of Commons, 1754-1790 (London, 1964), III, 193.

Rochford did at least share with his brother a love of country life, with its ample amenities for riding and hunting, but his chief preoccupation at St Osyth in these years was the improvement of the Park.³² The results of his efforts, or rather his expenditure, are proudly displayed in a specially commissioned map of 1762, which shows among other things a large ornamental lake, straight-edged à la Versailles, with a row of fish ponds and a pump-house ; a Hermitage (later converted to a Grotto) ; a large new-plantation with curving carriage-drives ; a Pigeon House ; a building marked on a later map as the Deer House ; and what appears to have been a Belvedere, an artificial mound from which to obtain a prospect. Surrounding the house itself are various formal gardens and a sinuous maze. Here, as in the Park itself, the artist has carefully depicted the many poplar trees for which St Osyth was justly renowned.³³

Though within sixty miles of London, St Osyth was in a rather remote corner of Essex, overlooking extensive coastal salt marshes ; in winter, with the parlous condition of roads in the eighteenth century, access was at times easier by sea. This isolation made visits by friends especially welcome, yet even for special occasions such as Rochford's birthday, which regularly brought Garrick up from London, some douceurs and attractions were necessary. In 1758 we find Rochford inviting a friend with the promise of

32. No evidence has yet come to light regarding Rochford's landscape designer. Thomas Reynolds was at this time (c.1759) building a house and laying out a park for Rochford's friend and fellow Whig Isaac Martin Rebow near Colchester ; but Miss Nancy Briggs of the Essex Record Office thinks St Osyth was the work of Richard Woods, from the similarity of "several pieces of water" he laid out for Rebow a few years later. See Essex Record Office, D/DHt.B.1., Rebow Papers.

33. "A Plan of the Park, Gardens, &c., at St Osyth in the County of Essex, the seat of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Rochford, as taken in 1762 by Edwd. John Eyre, Surveyor." Essex Record Office, D/DU, 268/15.

some Country Dancing, for which he begs him to bring the latest music books from London ; but Rochford is careful to add the offer of a post-chaise to meet him at Colchester.³⁴ In the absence of such visitors, and when the weather necessitated recourse to indoor pursuits such as cards and backgammon, Rochford may also have exercised his apparently not inconsiderable skill at carving in ivory.³⁵

The coastal isolation of St Osyth nevertheless made Rochford ideally situated for the discharge of his duties as Vice-Admiral of the coasts of Essex. One example of his work in this capacity is available from August 1761. when a brig from Scotland went aground at night on the Gunfleet Sands. Having got the crew and passengers safely ashore at first light, Rochford's yacht returned with two local sloops to recover the cargo, which they brought to Brightlingsea.³⁶

Rochford's standing in the county was greatly enhanced in April 1756 by his appointment as Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of Essex.³⁷ As Lord Lieutenant, Rochford's chief duty was to preside over the Quarter Sessions of the Justices, though in practice few Lords Lieutenant did so in person, preferring to nominate a deputy for this tedious task. Of greater importance, and possibly of more interest to Rochford, was his duty to command the forces of the county in the event of an emergency or an invasion.

34. Rochford to ? (possibly Garrick), "St Osyth by the Mill, 19 Septbr, 1758" ; signed holograph in my possession.
35. Horace Walpole concedes that Rochford "excelled in turning in ivory"; Walpole's Anecdotes of Painting in England, edited by F.W. Hilles and P.B.Daghlian (Yale, 1937), p.230.
36. Admiralty Office report, 17 August 1761. I am indebted for this information to Mr Kenneth Walker, who copied the extract from a 1761 paper. He did not, however, note the exact reference. The Vice-Admiralty records at the Essex Record Office date only from 1795.
37. The order for Rochford's commission, signed by Holderness, dated 22 March 1756, is in BM Add MSS 35604, f.305. London Magazine, XXV (1756), p.196 ; Collins, Peerage, IV, 144 ; Doyle, Baronage, III, 164 ; D.N.B., XXI, 1344.

Essex was one of the south-east counties most directly exposed to an invasion from the Continent, and Rochford's appointment almost coincided with the formal declaration of war on France in May 1756. With the passing of Pitt's 1757 Militia Bill, Rochford's activities as Lord Lieutenant were greatly intensified, and militia affairs took up much of his time throughout the Seven Years' War. He made the first appointment of officers to the Essex militia at a meeting in July 1758 at Chelmsford. Not surprisingly, his friends William Harvey and Isaac Martin Rebow became the commanders of the two battalions, the West Essex based at Romford and the East Essex based at Colchester. On 1 November 1759, Rochford was himself appointed Colonel of the Essex militia, in addition to his Lord Lieutenancy, and he supervised the manoeuvres of the two battalions until their disembodiment in December 1762. ³⁸

As Lord Lieutenant of the county and Colonel of militia, it was only to be expected that Rochford should take some part in county politics, and he was regarded in these years as the leader of the strong Whig 'interest' in Essex. Though he took an active interest in local election business, his personal patronage and influence does not seem to have been very great, except in concert with such principal Whigs (some of them his close friends) as Rigby, Barrington, Tylney, and Nugent. ³⁹

Nevertheless, it was partly thanks to Rochford's long-standing personal friendship that Sir William Maynard, head of one

38. J.W. Burrows, The Essex Militia (1929), III, 126-132. Doyle, Baronage, III, 164, alone gives the date for Rochford's Colonelcy. The Essex Militia Lists and Returns from 1757 onwards are in the Essex Record Office, but the Lieutenancy Minutes (L/M, 1-21), date only from 1762, and are bare and formal; see F.G. Emmison, Guide to the Essex Record Office (Chelmsford, 1946), I, 76-88.

39. A. Pickersgill, "Parliamentary Elections in Essex . . . 1759-1774," (unpublished M.A. thesis, Manchester University, 1953) pp.109-121.

of the oldest Tory families in Essex, was persuaded to stand in the government interest in 1759, after a meeting of the principal Whigs at Rochford's Berkeley Square house had failed to produce a suitable candidate following the death of Sir John Abdy in April. The county seats had been a Tory preserve since 1734, and Newcastle was delighted that Rochford had managed to split the Tory interest at last. The other leading Tory, Sir John Tyrell, declined to stand, and Maynard was elected unopposed. But with the prospect of a general election in 1760, Tyrell determined to stand again, and caused some alarm, until at the Brentwood Races in September that year, Rochford persuaded his fellow militia commander Will Harvey to join Maynard instead. Rochford was also closely involved in the Colchester election of 1760, in which his friend Rebow was returned, and Rochford was appointed Steward in July 1762 for the revival of the town's Charter. ⁴⁰

County electioneering was not, however, the level of political activity to which Rochford aspired. Though his hopes for a ministerial post had not materialized on his return from Turin, he seems still to have favoured a diplomatic career as his best available avenue to high office. When Sir Benjamin Keene, the British ambassador at Madrid, died in December 1757, Rochford made it known that he wanted that post. However, he was not to know that Newcastle had already promised this vacancy, years before. It must nevertheless have been galling for Rochford

40. BM Add MSS 32829, f.23, Rochford to Newcastle, 11 April 1759 ; *ibid.*, f.25, Newcastle to Rochford, 11 April 1759 ; BM Add MSS 32890, fos. 118 and 237, Rochford to Newcastle, 17 and 21 April 1759 ; BM Add MSS 32912, f.183, Rochford to Newcastle, 27 September 1760 ; BM Add MSS 32913, f.26, Rochford to Newcastle, 10 October 1760. See also Pickersgill (cited in note 39), pp.134-140 ; L. Namier and J. Brooke, The History of Parliament, The House of Commons, 1754-1790 (London, 1964), I, 274-5, 277.; and L. Namier, England in the Age of the American Revolution (2nd edition, 1963), p.195.

to see appointed to Madrid the very man who had succeeded him at Turin ; the Earl of Bristol.⁴¹

With no further openings or even prospects in the diplomatic service in view of the war in Europe, Rochford had to be content with his lucrative offices as Groom of the Stole and first Lord of the Bedchamber. He owed these offices to the personal favour of George II, and took care that he should give no offence to warrant his dismissal from them. But the aging King unexpectedly died of a stroke on 24 October 1760, and was succeeded by his grandson as George III.

The Groom of the Stole was by custom entitled to the contents of the late King's bedroom, but Rochford was induced to relinquish this claim for a few items of furniture and a cash settlement of £ 3,000.⁴² The new King brought new favourites, and Rochford was replaced as Groom of the Stole by George III's friend and mentor, Lord Bute.⁴³ Yet it has been said that Rochford yielded his office with such good grace that he retained favour at Court ; certainly, within a few months, he was given a pension on the Irish establishment of £ 2,000 a year.⁴⁴

41. Daily Advertiser, 4 January 1758 ; Walpole to Mann, 11 January and 14 April 1758, Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XXI, 166, 190. Bristol sailed for Spain in July ; he was replaced at Turin by Lord Bute's brother, James Mackenzie ; London Gazette, 17 June 1758. See also, Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, p.125.

42. Journal of the House of Commons, XXXII, 531, with a note explaining this arrangement. From the items Rochford was allowed to keep, he gave a 'Breeches' Bible and some velvet bed-hangings to the parish church of SS Peter and Paul at St Osyth. The Bible is still preserved there ; the hangings were made into cushions and altar-cloths. See Essex Herald, 15 December 1896, and Essex Review, IV (1897), p.123.

43. Walpole wrote to Montague, 31 October 1760 : "Poor Lord Rochford is undone ; nobody is unreasonable to save him." Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), IX, 316.

44. Walpole's Memoirs of the Reign of George III, edited by Sir Denis le Marchant (London, 1845), I, 10-11, note. See also Walpole to Mann, 5 December 1760, Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XXI, 460.

Rochford's brother Richard was less fortunate, and did not appear on the new list of Grooms of the Bedchamber ; nor did Rochford's old friend Sir John Clavering.⁴⁵

A return to diplomacy was now all the more needful.

It was widely known that Bristol disliked Madrid, and had failed to gain the confidence of the new Spanish King, Charles III, and his ministers. But the renewal of the Family Compact between France and Spain in August 1761 and Spain's subsequent entry into the war against England made Bristol's recall inevitable. His departure from Madrid without taking leave on 17 December 1761 marked the rupture of relations between Spain and England.⁴⁶

The end of the war, after Spain's humiliations at Manila and Havana, reopened the prospect of the Madrid embassy for Rochford, but he was not in fact the likeliest choice. Sir James Gray was the more logical choice, in view of the close friendship he had established with Charles III as King of Naples.⁴⁷ By the end of 1762, Gray talked openly of his expected appointment to Madrid.⁴⁸

But logic sometimes has little to do with such appointments, and both Gray and Rochford were to be disappointed. Cumberland's waning influence had been transferred from Rochford to the fourth Earl of Sandwich, who was now named for Madrid and began to draw his pay as ambassador.⁴⁹ However, there were still a few other choice openings available at the end of the war. The Duke of Bedford had gone

45. Walpole to Mann, 5 December 1760 ; Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XXI, 460.

46. Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, p.135. See also Walpole to Mann, 14-16 November 1761 ; Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XXI, 548.

47. Mann to Walpole, 12 December 1761 ; Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XXI, 556.

48. Mann to Walpole, 4 December 1762 ; Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XXII, 107.

49. SP 105/314, f.400, Gray to Mann, 14 December 1762 ; F. Spencer, The Fourth Earl of Sandwich, Diplomatic Correspondence, 1763-1765 (Manchester, 1961), pp.1-2. See also, D.N.B., XXXVIII, 254.

to Paris in September 1762 to negotiate the peace treaty, but he was not to remain there. In addition, it was intended to appoint a full ambassador to Vienna. Rochford's faint hopes of a cabinet post failed to materialize in the ministerial changes following Bute's resignation in April 1763, so that a diplomatic posting seemed his only chance of worthwhile employment. But the chance eluded him. In May, Viscount Stormont, who had stayed with Rochford at Turin in 1751, was appointed to the new embassy at Vienna, and soon afterwards Lord Hertford was named for Paris. ⁵⁰

Unlike Aix-la-Chapelle, which had heralded his appointment to Turin, the Peace of Paris brought Rochford little joy. Indeed, he was gravely ill throughout April 1763, from "a violent fever," which left him very weak. ⁵¹ Yet one small ray of hope remained. Sandwich had recently taken over the Admiralty in addition to his Madrid embassy, and it remained to be seen which of the two he would retain. At last, in June, Sandwich relinquished the Madrid embassy on the promise of a Secretaryship, and probably thanks to Sandwich's recommendation, Madrid was offered not to Gray but to a convalescent Rochford. ⁵²

Naturally, Rochford accepted with alacrity : such an unexpected turn of fortune undoubtedly speeded his recovery, for he was soon making preparations for his journey to Spain. By August,

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50. Walpole to Mann, 10 April 1763 ; Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), XXII, 130. Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, pp.22, 38.
51. Rochford to Sir Philip Francis, 10 May 1763 ; Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, Autograph Series, Folio 229. I am indebted to the Curator, Mr H. Cahoon, for a photostat of this letter.
52. Rochford was named for Madrid on 18 June 1763 ; Collins, Peerage, IV, 144, and Jenkinson Papers, 1760-1766, edited by N.S. Jucker (London, 1949), p.176, both give 8 June, but the Annual Register for 1763, p.130, gives 18 June from the London Gazette, as does the London Magazine, XXXII (1763), p.337. Sandwich finally became Secretary of State for the Northern Department on 9 September ; on his manoeuvres for office, see L. Namier, England in the Age of the American Revolution (2nd edition, 1963), pp.382-385.

he had arranged to have his wine and a spare coach shipped in advance,⁵³ and on 11 September he at last applied to his former school friend Richard Aldworth Neville, now Secretary to the Paris embassy, for French passports to be made out covering himself, Lady Rochford, two secretaries, eight servants, and all their baggage.⁵⁴ The two secretaries presumably comprised a private secretary and Rochford's chaplain, de Visme, for the newly appointed Secretary to the Madrid embassy, Colonel Edward Ligonier, was to set out for Madrid ahead of Rochford, to prepare for his formal entry.⁵⁵ Also to arrive at Madrid shortly before Rochford was the British Consul-General for Spain, Stanier Porten, whose connexion with Rochford was to last for the remainder of Rochford's public career.⁵⁶

Even in the midst of his preparations for Madrid, Rochford was involved in local election business in Essex, for Will Harvey had died on 11 June 1763. As late as 25 September, Rochford was still corresponding with Grenville over the interesting contest between Conyers and Luther, but the election did not take place until December, by which time Rochford was in Madrid.⁵⁷

53. BM Add MSS 38191, f.78, Grenville to Jenkinson, 5 August 1763, printed in Jenkinson Papers, 1760-1766, edited by N.S. Jucker, pp.175-6.

54. Historical Manuscripts Commission, 8th Report, Various : Braybrooke Papers, Neville Correspondence, p.286. Aldworth had changed his surname to Neville in August 1762 ; D.N.B., XL, 298-9.

55. Ligonier arrived at Madrid on 19 November ; SP 94/165, f.175, Ligonier to Halifax, 20 November 1763. He had been A.D.C. to George III and was later created Earl Ligonier ; D.N.B., XXXIII, 242-3.

56. SP 94/165, f.159, Porten to Halifax, 10 November 1763, the date of his arrival at Madrid. Rochford occasionally wrote his name Porteen, presumably from its pronunciation. Porten had been Consul at Madrid since April 1760. His youngest sister, Judith, was the mother of Edward Gibbon the historian. See D.N.B., XVI, 167.

57. L. Namier and J. Brooke, The History of Parliament, The House of Commons, 1754-1790, I, 275-6, with references.

Having received his Instructions of 20 September,⁵⁸ Rochford set out from London in the following week, and proceeded direct to Paris. Here he had several amicable conversations with Prince Masserano, the new Spanish ambassador bound for London. Secretary Neville also obtained for Rochford an audience with the French King, which took place at Fontainebleau on 18 October. Rochford found himself very graciously received, and in a private conversation with Louis XV talked "a considerable time" on various subjects. Two days later, Rochford resumed his journey to Spain.⁵⁹

Travelling south to Lyons, Rochford followed the same path which had taken him to Turin fourteen years before, but this time he continued down the Rhône Valley, turning aside at Avignon for Montpellier, where he visited the novelist Lawrence Sterne.⁶⁰ Rochford then presumably followed the coastal road into Spain, and arrived at Barcelona "in perfect health," to be greeted by the Governor of the City and the Captain-General of Catalonia.⁶¹ After an enjoyable few days' rest, Rochford left Barcelona on 19 November for the last leg of his journey to Madrid, and arrived in the Spanish capital in the afternoon of 6 December 1763.⁶²

58. SP 94/165, fos.50-65 ; FO 90/62, fos.58-74.

59. Nassau Papers, E/1, and SP 94/165, f.125, Rochford to Halifax, (Paris) 18 October 1763.

60. The Letters of Lawrence Sterne, edited by L.P. Curtis (Oxford, 1935), pp.208-209 ; Sterne was lying ill at Montpellier. This may have been merely a courtesy visit ; there is no other evidence of Rochford's friendship with Sterne.

61. SP 94/165, f.173, Ligonier to Halifax, 19 November 1763.

62. SP 94/165, f.193, Ligonier to Halifax, 7 December 1763.

CHAPTER 8 : Madrid ; Rochford's Instructions and Early Reports.

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Madrid : Rochford's Instructions andEarly Reports

Ferdinand VI of Spain died on 10 August 1759 and was succeeded by his energetic half-brother Charles III, who since 1738 had been King of Naples and the Two Sicilies.¹ This long-awaited succession occurred in the midst of a major European war which had as its overseas counterpart a bitter struggle for colonial mastery between Britain and France in North America, the Caribbean, West Africa, and India. Spain had thus far remained neutral, though vitally interested in the outcome, and irritated by the interference of both belligerents with her shipping. Spain's relations with Britain had been generally friendly across the 1750s, based on strong reciprocal trading links which had been confirmed by a series of commercial treaties extending back into the seventeenth century.²

Yet the year of Charles III's accession to the Spanish throne was also Britain's annus mirabilis in the Seven Years' War, especially in the colonial theatre, with the capture of Guadeloupe, France's richest island in the West Indies, the conquest of Quebec by Wolfe, and two striking naval victories off Lagos and in Quiberon Bay, following earlier successes in West Africa and India. With the

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1. Sir Charles Petrie, King Charles III of Spain ; An Enlightened Despot (London, 1971), p.66 ; this is the only full biography in English of Charles III ; the standard lives are A. Ferrer del Rio, Historia del Reinado de Carlos III en España (Madrid, 1856), and F. Rousseau, Règne de Charles III d'Espagne (Paris, 1907). For his earlier career, see H. Acton, The Bourbons of Naples, 1734-1825 (London, 1956).
 2. J.O. McLachlan, Trade and Peace with Old Spain, 1667-1750 (Cambridge, 1940), pp.2-29 ; A. Christelow, "Economic Background of the Anglo-Spanish War of 1762," Journal of Modern History, XVIII (1946), p.22 ; R. Pares, War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739-1763 (Oxford, 1936), pp.556-579.

surrender of Montreal in 1760, France's colonial empire in North America lay exposed to virtual control by British forces.³

These remarkable successes greatly alarmed Charles III, and even his pro-British foreign minister Richard Wall was perturbed that the collapse of French colonies in North America and the West Indies exposed the Spanish American empire to what seemed an imminent British attack.⁴ Spanish forces in the Americas were known to be weak and ill-equipped, yet even if spared a military conquest, there seemed nothing to prevent the redoubling of Britain's already considerable illicit trade with the Spanish colonies. Added to this was the inevitable friction between neutrals and belligerents over prize-ships; Spain's was now a decidedly uneasy neutrality.⁵

This year of miracles so-called, 1759, was also the first year in power of a new French foreign minister, the redoubtable Duc de Choiseul, whose immediate task was to prevent France's isolation in Europe and retrieve something at least from a disastrous colonial war.⁶ Choiseul immediately began to play with effect on the fears of Charles III and his ministers, emphasising the danger to Spanish possessions of British dominance in North America and

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3. G. Williams, The Expansion of Europe in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1966), pp. 83-92, is the best short summary of these events: the standard works are J.S. Corbett, England in the Seven Years' War (London, 1907), and L.H. Gipson, The British Empire before the American Revolution, Volumes VI-VII, The Great War for the Empire (New York, 1946-54).
 4. Wall replaced Carvajal in 1754; he had been Spanish ambassador in London 1748-52. See J.O. McLachlan, "The Seven Years' Peace and the West Indian policy of Carvajal and Wall," English Historical Review LIII (1938), pp. 457-477.
 5. Z.E. Rashed, The Peace of Paris, 1763 (Liverpool, 1951), pp. 34-37; J.O. McLachlan, "The Uneasy Neutrality; A Study of Anglo-Spanish disputes over Spanish ships prized 1756-1759," Cambridge Historical Journal, VI (1938), pp. 55-77.
 6. Etienne-Francois, Duc de Choiseul (1719-85) replaced Bernis as foreign minister to Louis XV in 1758; J.F. Ramsay, Anglo-French Relations 1763-1770; A Study of Choiseul's Foreign Policy (University of California Publications in History, Berkeley, 1939), pp. 143-5.

the West Indies, but he was also motivated by a desire to capture for France Britain's extensive trade privileges in Old Spain.⁷

The result of continued British success overseas and rising Spanish alarm was the third renewal of the Family Compact between the Courts of Madrid and Versailles on 15 August 1761. This was much more than a pact of friendship ; it was a full defensive alliance which pledged France and Spain to mutual assistance in the event of attack by any other maritime power. In addition to the stipulated naval and military succours, the Family Compact gave important commercial concessions to France, chiefly the relaxation of export and import restraints and equal treatment in matters of taxation, navigation and commerce. French subjects in Spain were no longer to be treated as foreigners in the disposition of their property, while Spanish and Neapolitan subjects were to enjoy the same privilege in France. In addition to the main treaty, a secret Convention was signed at the same time which committed Spain to join the war against England on 1 May 1762 if peace had not been concluded before then. France promised to make no separate settlement, and undertook to champion Spanish grievances against Britain in any negotiations for peace. It was also agreed that Portugal should be induced to forsake her submissive alliance with Britain and to collaborate more closely with the Family powers.⁸

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7. A. Christelow, "French Interest in the Spanish empire during the ministry of the Duc de Choiseul, 1759-1771," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXI (1941), pp.520-530.
 8. The full text is printed in L. Blart, Les Rapports de la France et de l'Espagne après le pacte de famille (Paris, 1915), pp.205-217 ; see also F.P. Renaut, "Etudes sur le Pacte de Famille . . . 1760-92," Revue de l'histoire des colonies françaises, IX (1921), pp.35-36, and Rashed, Peace of Paris, pp.75-9, 96-7. The economic aspects are considered in detail by Ramsay, Anglo-French Relations, 1763-1770, pp.151-7, and Christelow, "Economic Background of the Anglo-Spanish War of 1762," Journal of Modern History, XVIII (1946), pp.23-25. In Spanish, see Rafael Altamira y Crevea, Historia de España (Barcelona, 1911), IV, 49-51 ; D. Antonio Ballesteros y Beretta, Historia de España y su influencia en la Historia universal (2nd edition, Madrid, 1964), VIII, 164-166.

News of the signing of the Family Compact soon leaked out, but coincided with rather than caused the failure of the current round of peace talks in September 1761, conducted by Stanley at Paris and Bussy in London.⁹ In England, Pitt demanded an immediate declaration of war on Spain, but his cry met ministerial reluctance and an outright rejection by George III ; Pitt resigned his office in October 1761.¹⁰ In Spain, Charles III and his ministers waxed in bellicosity, encouraged by Choiseul and by the uncritical reports of Fuentes, the Spanish ambassador in London, who grossly underestimated Britain's capacity to continue the war overseas. It was assumed at Madrid that Britain was exhausted and would not withstand the combined power of France and Spain together. Choiseul pressed hard for an early declaration of war by Spain, stressing Spain's unresolved grievances such as the old problem of Gibraltar, the activities of British logwood cutters in the Bay of Honduras, Spain's claim to a share in the Newfoundland fisheries, the disputes over prize-ships, and of course British contraband trade with Old and New Spain alike. By December 1761, the expected rupture of relations had occurred, and in January 1762 Britain declared war on Spain.¹¹

9. Rashed, Peace of Paris, pp.87-99 ; A. Bourguet, "Le Duc de Choiseul et l'Angleterre ; la mission de M. de Bussy a Londres," Revue Historique, LXXI (1899), pp.1-32.

10. J. Steven Watson, The Reign of George III (Oxford, 1960), pp.73-4.

11. Blart, Rapports, pp.6-9 ; Christelow, "Economic Background of the Anglo-Spanish War of 1762," pp.25-26 ; A. Bourguet, "Le Duc de Choiseul et l'Alliance Espagnole après le pacte de famille," Revue Historique, XCIV (1907), pp.4-27. On Anglo-Spanish disputes, see Stetson Conn, Gibraltar in British Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century (New Haven, 1942) ; V.L. Brown, "Anglo-Spanish Relations in America, 1763-74," Hispanic American Historical Review, V (1922), especially pp.351-385 ; V.L. Brown, "Spanish claims to a share in the Newfoundland fisheries in the Eighteenth Century," Canadian Historical Association Report (1925), pp.64-82 ; R. Pares, Colonial Blockade and Neutral Rights, 1739-63 (Oxford, 1938), pp.285-292 ; V.L. Brown, "Contraband trade ; a factor in the decline of Spain's empire in America," Hispanic American Historical Review, VIII (1928), pp.178-189.

Brief as it was, the Anglo-Spanish War of 1762 proved to be an almost unmitigated disaster for Spain. Charles III devised grandiose plans for the capture of Britain's overseas possessions, and hoped for a continental embargo on British goods ; but after the failure of his campaign against Portugal, which only exposed the weakness of his poorly trained army, he was forced to realize that Spain simply lacked the resources for global strategy. ¹²

Charles also had to admit that his informants had seriously underestimated Britain's military resourcefulness. In August 1762, the great citadel of the Spanish West Indies, Havana, was captured by British forces, together with a vast quantity of shipping and merchandise. In October, Manila and the Philippines surrendered to a British force under General Draper, who spared the city from sack for a negotiated ransom drawn in part on the Spanish Royal Treasury by the Archbishop of Manila. ¹³

While Spain suffered these stunning defeats, France was steadily losing the remainder of her valuable West Indian islands, notably Martinique and Grenada ; these losses broke French power in the Caribbean. ¹⁴ The impossible had become reality ; British military prowess had defeated the combined might of France and Spain overseas ; the powers of the Family Compact were reduced to exhaustion and humiliating defeat. The resumption of peace talks soon resulted in a preliminary settlement signed at Fontainebleau in November 1762. ¹⁵

12. Blart, Rapports, pp.34-36 ; Renaut, "Etudes . .," pp.39-40 ; Christelow, "Economic Background . .," pp.31, 34-5 ; A. Bourguet, "Un ultimatum franco-espagnol au Portugal," Revue d'histoire diplomatique (1910), pp.21-25.

13. Altamira, Historia de España, IV, 51-52 ; Ballesteros y Beretta, Historia, VIII, 167-172 ; on Manila, see Documents illustrating the British Conquest of Manila 1762-1763, edited by N.P. Cushner (London, Royal Historical Society, 1971), pp.120-125.

14. Williams, Expansion of Europe, pp.87-88.

15. Rashed, Peace of Paris, pp.180-186.

The terms of the definitive treaty signed at Paris on 10 February 1763 did not quite embody the Carthaginian peace Pitt had desired, yet they still amounted to a humiliating defeat for the new Family Compact. While France lost the larger part of her former colonial empire, Spain was fortunate to recover most of her recent losses. With the exception of two small islands as refuges for her fishermen, France ceded to Britain all of her possessions in Canada (Articles 4, 5, 6.) and transferred her part of Louisiana west of the Mississippi to Spain (Article 7). Britain restored Belle Isle en Mer off Brittany, and most of France's rich sugar islands in the West Indies (Articles 8, 9, 11), while Britain recovered Minorca (Article 12).

Spain ceded Florida to Britain, along with her territories east of the Mississippi (Article 20), while Britain returned Havana and Cuba (Article 19). Manila and the Philippines were likewise restored to Spain, but the treaty made no mention of the Archbishop's ransom for the city (Article 23). The thorny question of prize-ships was to be settled by the British Admiralty Courts (Article 16), the British logwood cutters in the Bay of Honduras were to remain there unmolested so long as their forts were dismantled (Article 17), and Spain relinquished all claim to a share in the Newfoundland fisheries (Article 18). 16

Perhaps most importantly for Britain, the Treaty of Paris renewed without exception all existing commercial agreements between Britain and Spain, especially Keene's advantageous 1750 treaty (Article 2), so that while the Louisiana cession preserved a buffer

16. The text of the Treaty is printed in Rashed, Peace of Paris (1951), pp. 212-229. See also, Ballesteros y Beretta, Historia de España, VIII, 172-173.

between Mexico and British North America, Charles III's plans to put an end to Britain's trade privileges with Old Spain suffered total defeat. ¹⁷

Choiseul saw the Peace of Paris as a humiliating disaster, which though it might have been worse needed to be redressed without delay. Until his fall from power at the end of 1770, Choiseul's prime concern was his projected 'revanche' against England, to recover France's lost colonial territories, and he saw as his best tool to fashion such a project the assistance of Spain under the Family Compact. ¹⁸

Britain could therefore safely assume continued French enmity after 1763, but the question facing the French and British governments alike was Charles III's readiness to be involved in the 'revanche' after the disastrous war of 1762. Was Spain equally bent on revenge, or did she blame France for dragging her into a humiliating failure? How soon would Spain possess the military capacity to resume war against Britain? How closely devoted was Charles III now to the French connexion under the Family Compact?

Finding answers to these and other related questions was the main task of the first British ambassador appointed to Madrid after the Peace of Paris.

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17. In fact, trade between England and Spain revived remarkably swiftly after the end of hostilities; see The Fourth Earl of Sandwich, Diplomatic Correspondence, 1763-1765, edited by Frank Spencer (Manchester, 1961), p.16, note, with table of returns. See also, Christelow, "Economic Background . . .", pp.32-34; Rashed, Peace of Paris, pp.19-21; Renaut, "Etudes . . .", pp.47-52. On the Louisiana cession, see A.S. Aiton, "The diplomacy of the Louisiana Cession," American Historical Review, XXXVI (1930-31), pp.701-720.
 18. Ramsay, Anglo-French Relations 1763-1770, pp.146-7; see also E.T. Daubigny, Choiseul et la France d'Outre-Mer; Etude sur la politique coloniale au XVIIIe siècle (Paris, 1892); A. Bourguet, Etudes sur la politique étrangère du Duc de Choiseul (Paris, 1907), and Bourguet, "Le Duc de Choiseul et l'Alliance Espagnole après le Pacte de Famille," Revue Historique, XCIV (1907), pp.23-27.

Rochford's instructions for his Madrid embassy were conveyed to him in two separate papers ; the first, his "General Orders," were rather brief and formal, whilst the second, his "Particular & Private Instructions," were much more detailed and over twice as long. 19

The "General Orders" contained the usual routine instructions regarding the ambassador's journey to his post, the formal presentation of his credentials at a royal audience, and his obligations to correspond with other British diplomats and to obey all subsequent instructions from the Secretary of State (Clauses 1, 2, 3, 10, 11). The ninth clause reminded Rochford to pay particular attention to matters ceremonial, and to ensure that he was shown all the honours appropriate to his rank.

The greater part of the "General Orders" related to commercial matters. Rochford was to safeguard the welfare of all British subjects trading in Spanish territories (Clause 3), and to protect and uphold the work of the British consuls in Spain (Clause 4). He was to be alert to prevent any breach or abuse of the commercial treaties between Britain and Spain, but in the event of any such breach, he was to act promptly and demand redress on the spot ; only if these attempts failed was he to send home for further orders (Clause 3). As for specific suits or cases brought against the Spanish by British subjects, Rochford was to give his support only to well-founded or justifiable cases, taking particular care over those "which must raise Clamour." (Clause 5).

19. Public Record Office, FO 90/62, fos.58-74, dated 20 September 1763 ; The "General Orders" are fos.58-64, the "Particular & Private Instructions" fos.64-74. Duplicates are in SP 94/165, fos.50-65.

In his observation of the Spanish Court, Rochford was instructed to "use your best Skill to penetrate into their Secret Views and Designs," especially with regard to their policies in Europe and their commerce with Britain (Clause 7). The only other specific matter concerned an old bone of contention ; Gibraltar. Rochford was to keep himself well-informed of affairs relating to this outpost, and to prevent wherever possible any disputes or misunderstandings over it. But whilst assuring Spain of Britain's resolve not to countenance "a collusive Trade to the Prejudice of the King of Spain's Revenue," he was also to be very watchful of Spanish designs on Gibraltar (Clause 6).

These were all essential and fundamental objects of attention for the British ambassador at Madrid, but those "several Points of great Importance" following the Peace of Paris were reserved for more detailed setting-forth in Rochford's "Particular & Private Instructions." Here are found the vital questions regarding Spanish policies and intentions under the Family Compact, to which it was Rochford's task to supply answers without delay. ²⁰

His first task was to give the strongest assurances to the King of Spain that Britain was resolved to abide by the terms of the Treaty of 10 February 1763 as the basis of a durable peace (Clause 1). Conversely, the British ministers could not help "but be extremely solicitous to have certain Information" of the intentions of the King of Spain and his ministers ; whether they too were disposed to adhere to the peace settlement and cultivate friendship and harmony with Britain, or whether they entertained

20. Public Record Office, FO 90/62, fos.64-74 ; SP 94/165, fos.56-65.

thoughts of getting rid of their treaty obligations as soon as they were in a condition to avenge "the disgrace of their late Ill Successes," and embark on the recovery of their losses, either alone or in concert with France (Clause 2). If in fact the latter represented their "Secret Intentions," Rochford was to watch very carefully for any sign of military preparations, especially anything that seemed to be in excess of their normal establishment in America. Closely related to this point was the condition of Spain's finances, and the size of her debts, about which Rochford was to gather as much useful information as he could (Clause 3).

In view of their readiness to trade with Britain in the past, and the apparent "general Inclination of the People of Spain" in favour of this connexion, it was now a matter of considerable interest whether the war had changed this attitude, and created any general prejudice or resentment against Britain for the humiliating defeats inflicted on Spain overseas. It was hoped in London that the Spanish people would recognize that France was largely to blame for dragging them into a needless war. While attempting to sound opinion on this topic, Rochford was to give assurances that past disputes and conflicts settled in the peace treaty were now buried and forgotten, but where he found that French views prevailed, he was to drop a gentle reminder of Spain's "Shameful Injustice of falling, without any real Provocation," upon her neighbour Portugal. Such would be "proper Topicks of Defence" in the event of any criticism of Britain's proceedings in the war, but they were to be used with discretion, and in a spirit of friendliness, if they had to be used at all (Clause 4).

Though the commercial motives of the Family Compact, to transfer British trade privileges with Spain to the subjects of the French King, were frustrated by the renewal of all previous Anglo-Spanish commercial agreements in the Treaty of Paris, this area deserved the particular attention of the British ambassador. Rochford was to keep himself constantly informed through the British consuls in Spanish ports of any step which may seem to revive the commercial motives of the Family Compact, and to make immediate protests if the French were given privileges detrimental to British trade. Spain had offered at the peace talks to make a new Treaty of Commerce with Britain, presumably to limit the extent of existing privileges, but this had been refused, and Rochford was likewise to pay no heed to any farther proposals for such a revision (Clause 6).

Concerning Spain's relations with the rest of Europe, Rochford was to pay close attention to whatever connexions Spain had formed or was forming with other powers, especially France and Austria. It was known that a marriage alliance was afoot between the Courts of Madrid and Vienna ; Rochford was to discover all he could of the terms of this match, in order to judge how far it might affect the "general Balance of Power in Europe" and the present situation of Italy (Clause 5). Rochford was equipped with a copy of the Convention of June 1762 between France, Spain, and Savoy-Sardinia, settling at last the King of Sardinia's claims to part of Piacenza, which settlement Britain had supported and guaranteed. But Rochford was also to find out whether anything further was intended to be grafted on to this treaty, relating to the affairs of Italy (Clause 7).

Relations between Spain and Portugal, after their acrimonious confrontation in 1762, naturally formed a particular focus of attention for Rochford (Clause 8), but in addition, he was instructed to supply answers to several specific questions regarding Spanish policy towards north-eastern Europe. Reports had been received that a Spanish Secretary had been sent to Warsaw with credentials to the Primate of Poland ; what in fact was his errand ? Further, in view of the presence of Russian troops in Lithuania and the expected demise of the Polish King, what was Spanish policy towards the affairs of Poland ? Was there any agreed plan between the Courts of Madrid, Versailles, and Vienna, regarding the Polish succession ? (Clause 9).

Finally, Rochford was to devote his closest attention to the King of Spain himself, to his "Character, Genius, and Inclinations", his occupations, and his attitude towards foreign alliances. In particular, Rochford was to investigate "how far He may continue to be under the Influence of the French Court, and what Hopes you may see of weaning Him from that Partiality." If the prospect seemed fair, Rochford was to promote the idea of a closer alliance between Spain and England as being in Spain's best interests. At the same time, Rochford was to observe very closely "the particular Dispositions and Affections of the Spanish Ministers, their several Capacities, Power, and Credit with their Master ; their Sentiments upon the present State of Publick Affairs ; and, above all, their Bias towards the English or French Alliance." (Clause 10).

As at Turin, the observation of the King, Court, and ministers would be Rochford's constant duty.

The new British ambassador and his 'Family' arrived at Madrid in the afternoon of 6 December 1763, whereupon Rochford sent a note to the Marquis de Grimaldi, the Spanish Foreign Minister, notifying his arrival and desiring a time to call and present his Credentials.²¹ Grimaldi replied at once, suggesting noon the following day, at which time Rochford duly presented his Credentials. On 8 December, Grimaldi sent Rochford a note advising that the King would receive him at an audience that Sunday, 11 December. The day after receiving this note, Rochford had a visit from the *Introducteur des Ambassadeurs*, who informed him that his audience was fixed for ten in the morning, to be followed by audiences with the heir to the throne, the Prince of Asturias, at 11.30, and with the other members of the royal family at 12.30. He also suggested that Rochford should leave his card with the mayordomo mayor del rey, the Marquis de Montealegre, and with the Queen Mother's mavordomo, the Marquis de Populi.²²

On the morning of 11 December, Rochford accordingly proceeded in his coach to the Royal Palace, accompanied by his Secretary, Ligonier. They were met at the foot of the grand entrance steps by the *Introducteur* and conducted to the mayordomo mayor del rey, who immediately brought Rochford into the audience chamber, past the crowds of assembled courtiers and nobles ; the reception of an ambassador was an important event at the Spanish court.²³

21. SP 94/165, f.201, Rochford to Halifax, 12 December 1763.

22. Bodleian Library, Oxford ; Lyell MSS, Empt. 37 ; Rochford's Madrid Notebook, fos. 1-2. The front half of this notebook was used as a "Minute Book of Ceremonial." The back part contains entries headed simply "Intelligence" (fos.177verso-197verso). The notes are entirely in Rochford's own handwriting.

23. Charles Kany, Life and Manners in Madrid, 1750-1800 (Berkeley, California, 1932), p.144.

Upon his reception by Charles III, Rochford delivered himself of a carefully prepared little speech in French, which fulfilled the first clause of his Private Instructions, declaring Britain's desire for friendship with Spain and her resolve to abide by the terms of the peace treaty. After a polite exchange of remarks on this theme, Rochford bowed his way out, and was at once taken to his audience with the Prince of Asturias. Finally, after meeting other members of the royal family, Rochford rejoined the throng of courtiers and nobles, and went in to dine with the King. At the conclusion of the dinner, Rochford took his leave and returned to his coach in the forecourt of the Palace, then drove back to his house in the street of St Jerome.²⁴

The formal business of the day was not yet ended, however ; later that afternoon, Rochford returned to the Palace for his audience with the Queen Mother. Elisabeth Farnese, virtual ruler of Spain in the lifetime of her husband, Philip V, was now aged over seventy, yet Rochford had been instructed to find out what degree of influence, if any, she retained over Spanish policy, and to insinuate himself into her good graces.²⁵ He had no sooner arrived back at his house after this audience, when he was visited by the Introduteur and informed that an audience with the King's brother, Don Luis, had been arranged for the next morning, Monday 12 December.

24. Bodleian Library, Oxford ; Lyell MSS, Empt.37 ; Notebook, fos.3-4 ; SP 94/172, f.185, Rochford to Conway, 16 December 1765.

25. Rochford was originally instructed to confine himself to verbal assurances of George III's regard in his audience with the Queen Mother ; then he was equipped with written Credentials, in case the other ambassadors were so equipped ; but when Rochford found that this was not the case, he returned to his original instruction and confined himself to mere verbal assurances. SP 94/165, f.98, Halifax to Rochford, 27 September 1763 ; SP 94/165, f.201, Rochford to Halifax, 12 December 1763. On the Queen Mother's early life, see E. Armstrong, Elisabeth Farnese, Termagant of Spain (London, 1892).

Before his audience with Don Luis on the Monday, Rochford formally notified the other ambassadors of his arrival and reception by the Spanish King, so that the remainder of that week was taken up with the exchange of visits from other members of the diplomatic corps. All this Rochford described as "the Hurry of Business inevitable on my first coming to my Destination." ²⁶

Rochford was evidently pleased by his gracious reception at Madrid. He was told, but was not sure whether to believe, that Grimaldi had "shewn more Attention to me, than he has to any other Ambassador here." ²⁷ His earliest conversations at court accorded with the King's own assurances that it was Spain's intention to preserve and cultivate the peace ; "indeed, this seems to be the Language of the whole Court." ²⁸

Notwithstanding these encouraging beginnings, Rochford kept himself busy over the following few weeks, and was "very assiduous" in his attendance on the King, even when the Court removed itself to the Pardo in January, as was usual at this time of year. In addition, Rochford frequented the ministers and "those who are directly consulted," as well as "others who by indirect Methods have opportunities of throwing in their advice." These conversations were of course conducted with the aim of gathering "the best Informations" available on the topics commended to Rochford's attention in his instructions. ²⁹

26. Bodleian Library, Oxford ; Lyell MSS, Empt.37 ; Notebook, fos.4-5 ; SP 94/253, f.12, Rochford to John Murray, 19 December 1763.

27. SP 94/165, f.201, Rochford to Halifax, 12 December 1763.

28. SP 94/253, f.12, Rochford to Murray, 19 December 1763.

29. SP 94/166, f.25, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764.

Besides ministers and courtiers, Rochford also pursued his enquiries within the circle of the diplomatic corps. He was pleased to find as Sardinian ambassador at Madrid an earlier acquaintance from his Turin ministry ; Count Roubion. On renewing their acquaintance, Rochford found however that Roubion was still " a great Talker, a little indiscreet, and . . in his private character as well as his publick one, apt to temporize." In the tone of one who knows, Rochford added ; "His Court will not find fault with him for that." A more reliable ally was the Dutch minister, Doublet, who immediately took Rochford into his confidence. Doublet's comments were useful, for he was then "very well with the King of Spain," and though already a sworn enemy to Grimaldi, was "closely connected" with Squilaci, the Minister for War and Finance. The new Russian Envoy, Count Peter Buturlin, had also exchanged sharp words with Grimaldi, and though he readily made friends with Rochford, he was unlikely to be as useful as Doublet ; Rochford observed of Buturlin, "Pleasure seems to be his principal Pursuit." Apart from these few, the remaining members of the diplomatic corps at Madrid were "chiefly Creatures of the French Ambassador," the Marquis d'Ossun. Rochford found that Ossun enjoyed a considerable advantage over the other diplomats, from his being regarded at Madrid as an ambassadeur en famille. This meant that he and the ambassador from Naples were always called in first at the Levee, and Ossun was known to make good use of this opportunity to speak to the King before he received the other ministers. Rochford's only other prospective ally amongst the diplomatic corps, the Portuguese ambassador, had not yet arrived at Madrid. ³⁰

30. SP 94/166, fos.31-32, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764.

Outside the diplomatic corps, Rochford had a reliable informant and adviser in the British Consul-General, Stanier Porten, both from Porten's correspondence with the other Consuls in Spanish ports, and from his own circle of friends at Madrid. Porten had, in addition, resided for some years at Naples before his transfer to Madrid, so that he was not unacquainted with the government of Charles III.³¹ Equally useful yet even more advantageously situated, was Rochford's earliest and best friend at Court, the Duke de Losada, whose office as first Esquire of the Body made him the single most influential courtier about the King. Rochford's judgment of Losada agreed exactly with that of his predecessor ; "although the Duke's Genius is but moderate, he is a thorough honest Man, is more esteemed by the King of Spain than any Man here, and has had his Master's Confidence for these Number of Years past without the least Variation."³²

From these and other unrecorded sources, Rochford busily gathered his first impressions of the Spanish government and its policies, which he finally assembled into two extended and masterly dispatches of 13 January 1764. However, in his haste and anxiety to please, he overlooked one small point ; they arrived in London without any date. Though it was Rochford's ultimate responsibility, the omission was Ligonier's, it seems, for Rochford had left the completed dispatches unsealed in case he heard anything important at Court that day, but on his return with nothing to add, Ligonier had swiftly sealed up the packets and sent Potter the messenger off on his journey to London. Fortunately, this oversight did not detract from the value of Rochford's first major report.³³

31. D.N.B., XVI, 167 ; Gentlemen's Magazine (1760), p.203 ; London Magazine, XXIX (1760), p.221.

32. SP 94/166, f.29, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764 ; Bristol's comments are printed in Petrie, King Charles III of Spain, pp.96-8.

33. SP 94/166, f.52, Rochford to Weston, 16 January 1764.

This first major report took the form of answers to each successive article of Rochford's "Particular" Instructions ; indeed, Rochford began his "Secret and Separate" dispatch of 13 January by stating that he would, "for the sake of method," relate them in the same order. ³⁴

He had already fulfilled the first of these clauses in his little speech to the King at his first audience, noted earlier. In answer to the second clause, which asked whether Spain seemed likely to adhere to the peace settlement, or on the other hand wanted to be rid of her obligations in the Treaty of Paris, Rochford confidently claimed ;

"I can venture to give it as my opinion that they are not at all inclined to get rid of their Obligations ; and, if they were so inclined, not at all in a Condition to undertake it. Their Finances are low ; their Resources few ; and the Minister concerned for the Finances in Years and anxious only to supply the present Moment." ³⁵

This reasoning was sound enough ; Spain's exhaustion after the war of 1762 was obvious to all observers, and freely admitted at the Spanish Court itself. ³⁶

With her finances so low, it was not to be expected that Spain's military establishment would be at its best. In answer to the third clause of his Instructions on this point, Rochford gave a succinct yet detailed analysis of the state of the army. Though there had as yet been no postwar reductions in the infantry

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34. SP 94/166, f.36, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764, Secret and Separate. Though this dispatch follows his 'Most Secret' in the volume of SP, it should logically be treated first.
35. SP 94/166, f.36, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764, Secret and Separate.
36. V.L. Brown, Studies in the History of Spain in the second half of the Eighteenth Century (Northampton, Mass., 1930), p.30 and note 71 ; on his accession, Charles III was reputed to have found forty million duros in the Royal Coffers ; by 1763, this was all but exhausted.

regiments, Rochford's information led him to believe that "they are at present far from compleat, and ill-appointed." Several of the cavalry regiments had been incorporated into older Regiments of Horse, and while this reduced the actual number of regiments, Rochford noted that the remaining squadrons were thereby greatly strengthened. However, the volunteer regiments had all been disbanded, with the exception of that from Catalonia, which was now destined for Havana. ³⁷ On paper, the total establishment numbered 70,000 ; but of this, Rochford's informant estimated the effective forces at less than 40,000. ³⁸

As for naval strength, Rochford confessed that his information was still incomplete, since the new British Consul for Cartagena had yet to arrive at his post. Nevertheless, Rochford had procured a list of the Ferrol squadron, which he enclosed ; of the eleven capital ships based there, only two were armed and ready for service. ³⁹

The fears of the British government that the war of 1762 might have soured the Spanish nation against Britain and turned them rather towards France, Rochford firmly refuted in his reply to the fourth article of his Instructions :

" . . as the Inclination of the People of Spain has been always favorable to Alliance and Commerce with England, the same disposition still remains, and their Aversion to the French greater than ever. This I have dayly Instances of,

37. SP 94/166, f.37, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764, Secret and Separate ; the details of individual regiments Rochford takes almost word for word from his original information, a copy of which is preserved in Nassau Papers, E/24, "Etat des Troupes Espagnoles pour Monsr.le Comte de Rochford."

38. At the outbreak of war, the total Spanish establishment was estimated by Rochford's predecessor Bristol as 109,600 on paper, or 80,000 effectives ; Petrie, King Charles III of Spain, pp.101-102.

39. SP 94/166, f.42, for the Ferrol list.

and I shall scarcely ever find it necessary to rectify the Notions of the Old Spaniards on this account, who are apt enough openly to blame the Court for their late Proceedings."⁴⁰

This was certainly the most optimistic view which could be taken, and perhaps reflects rather too closely Rochford's informants amongst the 'Old Spaniards' at Court, for it is doubtful if he spoke for the country at large ; the humiliations of 1762 were resented just as much as French perfidy.⁴¹

The fifth clause of Rochford's Particular Instructions, relating to the 1759 Marriage Treaty with Vienna which was still not implemented, called forth a lengthy explanation of the delay, at the end of which Rochford concluded that Charles III viewed the prevarications of the Court of Vienna as so much "Tripotage" ; he seemed likely to insist on the original agreement.⁴²

As for the 1762 Convention between France, Spain, and Savoy-Sardinia over the fate of Piacenza, Rochford was unable to discover anything further in agitation which might be grafted onto this agreement ; the Sardinian ambassador was merely instructed to keep on the best of terms with the Spanish ministers and to avoid any disagreeable topics.⁴³ Rochford was also unable to discover any ulterior motive for the appointment of a Spanish Secretary to Warsaw. He was sure that the Court of Madrid supported the candidacy of the Elector of Saxony for the Polish throne, rather than any Russian protégé, but at present there seemed no likelihood of direct Spanish interference in the matter.⁴⁴

40. SP 94/166, f.37, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764, Secret and Separate.

41. See, for example, the Address by the Nobles of Aragon and Catalonia (1762) printed in Petrie, King Charles III, pp.109-110.

42. For further discussion of this Treaty, see below, pp.

43. SP 94/166, f.39, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764.

44. On the Polish Question, see the discussion in Spencer, The Fourth Earl of Sandwich, Diplomatic Correspondence, pp.25-42.

For the tenth and final article of his Particular Instructions, concerning the Spanish King, his ministers, and their attitudes, Rochford reserved a second and longer dispatch, by far the most interesting and valuable part of his first report from Madrid, in which he essayed a "short Sketch of this Court."⁴⁵

Rochford stressed that Charles III, so often represented as a weak prince, was in fact "very far from it." Rochford thought the King's general knowledge of European affairs and the political interest of Spain "good and just," so that "it would be impossible to put any gross Imposition upon him." Charles III impressed Rochford as being "extremely discerning." He had a habit of seeming to acquiesce with his ministers, "till he has learned their way of thinking, and then has been known to tell them at once to their great Surprise that they do not know what they are about, and that he will conduct the Affair himself." Once his mind was made up, the King's customary steadiness began to resemble obstinacy, and this usually deterred ministers from making any contrary moves. Unfortunately, Rochford thought, the King's "darling Passion of shooting" gave him little time to look more deeply into national affairs ; if he did, "he would, I am persuaded, manage them more wisely and better than his Ministers." Instead, in order to be rid of business quickly and be free to go shooting every day, "schemes laid before him do not undergo that strict Examination it is to be wished they did."⁴⁶

45. SP 94/166, fos.25-32, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764, Most Secret ; this dispatch (but not his Secret and Separate) is printed in full (but inaccurately) in W. Coxe, Memoirs of the Kings of Spain of the House of Bourbon (London, 1815), III, pp.285-292.

46. Kany, Life and Manners in Madrid, 1750-1800 (Berkeley, 1932), p.143, points out that this devotion to sport was intended to ward off the family tendency towards melancholy and depression.

Rochford heard it said at Madrid that the French ambassador Ossun openly claimed the revealing of the Family Compact as "a finesse of the Duke of Choiseul, to drive this Court into the War." As a result, Charles III now believed that he had been "duped by the French court" into joining a war already mostly lost. Further, Rochford was convinced that Charles III himself "was most certainly very much inclined not to break with us, and those who know him best have assured me, that it was a great astonishment to them when he did, and the first time they had known him to change his mind." ⁴⁷

As an example of the many small observations which led him to believe that Charles III was "not personally inclined to the French," Rochford related a brief anecdote, for the sake of a significant remark made recently by the King. On a tour of inspection at a new building in Madrid, Grimaldi had found fault with some feature of the architecture, at which the King turned to Losada and observed ; "On voudrait me faire faire tout à la mode française, mais moi, je veux faire à la mienne." Whoever tried to lead the King in a course of subservience to French wishes, Rochford thought, "must be very cautious." On the contrary, knowing that his country was "greatly exhausted," the King's personal intention was now to avoid trouble and "remain quiet" for as long as possible. Even so, his private expenses for buildings, new roads, and hunting, drove the Finance minister to distraction. ⁴⁸

47. SP 94/166, f.26 ; Bodleian Library, Oxford ; Lyell MSS, Empt.37 ; Rochford's Notebook, f.193v. Rochford may have been overly optimistic here, forgetting Charles's deep resentment against Britain for the insult of her 'gunboat diplomacy' at Naples in 1742 ; see Brown, Studies, pp.14-19 ; Petrie, King Charles III, pp.49-51.

48. SP 94/166, f.27 ; Brown, Studies, p.17, points out that the Family Compact was a matter of necessity rather than personal preference for Charles, citing F. Rousseau, Règne de Charles III d'Espagne (Paris, 1907), I, 35-44.

At this point it is of interest to compare Rochford's judicious official report on Charles III with a more lively and succinct sketch he made in a private letter to his friend Sandwich, Secretary of State for the Northern Department :

" You told me before I left England, you would be glad to know what I thought of His Catholic Majesty. His talents are extremely good, his discernment surprising, and his memory more so, very obstinate, and a little suspicious, feared by his ministers and both loved and feared by his subjects, affable beyond measure, conceives immediately anything you say to him, and replies quickly and cleverly. He is a slave to shooting which is his only passion and he breeds up the Prince of Asturias in the same taste, to whom in my opinion he gives a very bad education ; he wishes to see his own kingdom flourish, and has certainly no partiality to France. I wish I could say he believed our trade was as advantageous to his nation as it really is, but he is made to look upon our merchants as a parcel of smugglers." ⁴⁹

Closer to the King than any of his ministers was of course his Confessor, yet Rochford candidly admitted he knew little of this man's influence, "for he is very shy to everybody, and particularly so to foreign Ministers. He has certainly a great deal of Credit with the King." As an instance of this, Rochford related another anecdote ; the King's Confessor happened to remark one day that Havana fell exactly a year to the day after the Inquisitor-General had been banished ; the Inquisitor was at once recalled. ⁵⁰

49. Sandwich MSS, Rochford to Sandwich, 13 January 1764 ; printed in F. Spencer, The Fourth Earl of Sandwich, Diplomatic Correspondence (1961), pp.125-126.

50. SP 94/166, f.30.

The Queen Mother, Elisabeth Farnese, seemed at last to have accepted that her influence no longer extended to affairs of state ; "Her Majesty plainly sees, although to her great regret, that her Son never asks her Advice." Rochford suspected that she would probably "dabble" with Grimaldi as the most recent minister, but he was sure this would be fatal for Grimaldi if he encouraged her ; "For he must have more Skill than I think he does, if he can deceive His Catholic Majesty." 51

Grimaldi virtually embodied French influence at Madrid, more so than even the French ambassador himself ; "who, conscious that Grimaldi has a private correspondence with the Duke of Choiseul, is now rather shy in his Behaviour to this Frenchified Spanish Minister." Wall's last act before his retirement in October 1763 had been to "put all his friends about Grimaldi, and that is the only party he (Grimaldi) has here." These friends formed the core of the francophile party at Madrid. Two of them were now absent on embassies ; Fuentes, whom Rochford had known briefly at Turin, was now at Paris, and Masserano, whom Rochford had met on his way to Madrid, had replaced Fuentes at London. However, there still remained Count d'Aranda, and Don Agostino de Llano, who even as Wall's first Secretary had been "a most determined frenchman." As a result, Rochford observed, Grimaldi's predilection for France "grows stronger and stronger." 52

Grimaldi's behaviour on his arrival at Madrid had been "high and insolent beyond measure," especially towards the diplomatic corps, "who in general paid very servile court to him." Yet with Rochford he had begun very differently ; "making the greatest

51. SP 94/166, f.30 ; Armstrong, Elisabeth Farnese (1892), pp.395-6.

52. SP 94/166, f.28. Rochford's private opinion of Wall, not mentioned in SP, was that "a Roman Catholick & an Irish Jacobite, as Wall is, could never be a true friend to England," and that "Lord Bristol was most certainly duped by him." Bodleian, Lyell MSS, Empt.37, Rochford's Madrid Notebook, fos.176v-177v.

professions of personal friendship, and there has been no sort of attention he has not shewn me." ⁵³

Again, Rochford was a good deal more direct in his private letter to Sandwich than in his official dispatches :

" You will see by my dispatches to Lord Halifax what a dreadful man Grimaldi is to deal with. He does not believe I have that opinion of him which, I flatter myself, will be some advantage to me, though if he continues to go on as indiscreetly as he has done I much doubt whether he will stand his ground." ⁵⁴

Rochford had indeed mentioned in his official report that Grimaldi was "far from being discreet," and elsewhere added that he was "plausible, but entirely unacquainted with commercial Affairs, or the real interests of Spain with regard to Commerce." He had boasted to Rochford of his having "duped the French, in gaining considerable Advantages for the Spanish Trade by the Family Compact," yet Rochford observed that the policy of encouraging foreign imports for the sake of the duty to be raised from them was causing the decay of native Spanish industries. ⁵⁵

The Minister for War and Finance, Squilaci, was described by Rochford as "a Man of low Birth, indefatigable in Business, and rather likes it ; . . although the Clamours of the Nation are strong against him, he thinks himself quite secure in his place." Squilaci owed his position entirely to the King's personal favour, having been Charles's finance minister at Naples ; but as a Sicilian and a social nobody who scorned cultivated tastes, he was disliked

53. SP 94/166, f.28.

54. Sandwich MSS, Rochford to Sandwich, 13 January 1764 ; in Spencer, The Fourth Earl of Sandwich, Diplomatic Correspondence, p.126.

55. SP 94/166, fos.26, 28. See also, Ballesteros y Beretta, Historia de España, VIII, 174.

intensely at Court, while his financial measures ensured that he was despised by the nation at large. ⁵⁶ Rochford observed, however, that Squilaci paid court to the Marquis de la Ensenada, who formerly held three ministries under Ferdinand VI, and now hoped by his friendship with Losada to find re-employment. In view of Losada's regard for Ensenada, and his standing with the King, Rochford thought that Squilaci thereby had a stronger claim on the King's favour than Grimaldi. This was of more than passing significance for Rochford, since Squilaci professed the strongest possible liking towards Britain, which Rochford hoped to cultivate, even if, as he suspected, it sprang chiefly from a "motive of acting directly contrary to Grimaldi." ⁵⁷ Unfortunately, Rochford also heard it "from very good Authority" that the French ambassador had orders to help Grimaldi in bringing about Squilaci's ruin, for this very reason. ⁵⁸

Grimaldi had recently persuaded the King to hold weekly meetings with himself, Squilaci, and Ariaga, the Minister for Marine and the Indies, so that instead of being informed only of that which related to foreign affairs, Grimaldi would now be au fait with all internal and commercial affairs as well. This development would clearly confirm Grimaldi's ascendancy, since the King already had "a great Opinion of his (Grimaldi's) Abilities in Foreign Affairs." ⁵⁹

Don Julian Ariaga, Minister for Marine and the Indies, Rochford dismissed as "a well-meaning Man, but led entirely by

56. Brown, Studies, p.11 ; Petrie, King Charles III of Spain, p.60.

57. SP 94/166, f.29. See also, Altamira, Historia de España, IV, 53-54.

58. SP 94/166, f.28.

59. SP 94/166, fos.26-27 ; Brown, Studies, pp.11, 20-22. See also, Ballesteros y Beretta, Historia, VIII, 174-175, on Grimaldi and Squilaci.

the Jesuits, and although he meets the other two ministers, is never consulted but in what concerns his own Department." Rochford gathered that Grimaldi was trying to make him more active, but in remarking "both his indolence and his bigotry will prevent him," Rochford certainly underestimated Ariaga's ability and industry. ⁶⁰

Summing up his comments about the Spanish King's ministers, Rochford observed, "Grimaldi is the Minister I must do Business with, and he shews by his Behaviour to me, that he believes I have a Confidence in him, but I frequently see Squilaci, and least Grimaldi should not always report faithfully what I say, I acquaint the former with the points of Business I talk to the latter upon, and in Commercial affairs it is absolutely necessary to do, as they all pass through his hands. He is very Frank and open with me, has assured me that whenever I apply . . . , if my Demands are but Moderate, . . . I shall not meet with a refusal." ⁶¹

Rochford's conclusions from his two long dispatches of 13 January 1764 were that "from the present Situation of this Court, there never was a time, that we could insist more strongly on their acting conformably to the Treaties . . . as they were never more disposed to Pacifick Measures than they at present are," ⁶² and further, that "The King, his Ministers, and the whole nation are sensible and conscious of their Weakness from the Experience of the last War, as well as from their present Situation ; It is therefore very obvious that besides their professions to me, which are very strong, they will be obliged to abide by the Terms and Conditions of the last definitive Treaty." ⁶³

60. SP 94/166, f.30 ; see also Brown, Studies, pp.11-12, and A.S.Aiton, "Spanish Colonial Reorganization under the Family Compact," Hispanic American Historical Review, XII (1932), pp.270-80.

61. SP 94/166, f.32.

62. SP 94/166, f.40. (Secret and Separate)

63. SP 94/166, f.28. (Most Secret)

These first reports reached London on 25 January, by Potter the messenger, and on 3 February Halifax replied that George III had expressed satisfaction at "the very interesting and instructive accounts" Rochford had given of the Spanish Court, adding that he "much approves the Zeal and Diligence" Rochford had displayed in the short time since he arrived at Madrid. Halifax added as his own opinion ; "Your Excellency's Abilities, Assiduity, and Knowledge of the Characters and Connections of the Spanish Ministers give the most promising Assurance of the Success of your Ministry . ." ⁶⁴

It was at least an encouraging start.

64. SP 94/166, f.48, Halifax to Rochford, 3 February 1764.

CHAPTER 9 : Rochford as Ambassador at Madrid ;
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Rochford as Ambassador at Madrid :The Earlier Phase 1764-65

Madrid was in some respects a much pleasanter city when Rochford arrived there than it had been a decade before, in the time of Benjamin Keene. Charles III and his Queen, Maria Amalia, having made Naples a more beautiful and orderly city than it had been for many years, were shaken to find Madrid in 1759 rather more resembling a pig-sty than a capital city. Charles's first task as King of Spain was a radical clean-up of Madrid, initiating urgent improvements in paving, drainage, and street lighting, accompanied by the erection of fine new public buildings. The Queen's health, already impaired by a fall from her horse, did not recover from the initial shock of homesickness in Madrid's rigorous climate, and she was dead within a year of her arrival. As at Turin, Rochford had to deal with a widower King. ¹

Nevertheless, much was left unchanged. The new King could not be expected to ameliorate the climate, but at Court, where he was master, and where Rochford was condemned to spend some time, Charles did little to remedy the tedium and dullness of excessive etiquette and ceremonial, for which the Spanish Court was renowned. Maria Amalia had briefly injected some liveliness into the Court, but after her death Charles had settled into a fixed and precise daily routine, which did not admit of such frivolities as mistresses. The exterior gravity of the Court was typified by such ceremonies as

1. C. Petrie, King Charles III of Spain, p.96 ; Nicholas Henderson, "Charles III of Spain, an Enlightened Despot," History Today, XVIII (1968), pp.679-680 ; Beaumarchais in 1764 declared "the town is one of the cleanest I have seen, well spaced out, ornamented with numerous squares and public fountains" ; quoted in Cynthia Cox, The Real Figaro (London, 1962), pp.26-27.

the besamanos or official hand-kissing, held on saints' days and royal birthdays, which involved the ministers, ambassadors, and nobles, all in gala uniform, filing past each individual member of the royal family, even babes in arms, to pay their respects. ²

The movement of the whole Court from palace to palace according to the seasons was fixed like clockwork. Each year on 7 January the King and his entourage left Madrid for the Pardo, where they remained until Palm Sunday, returning to Madrid for Easter. After Easter, the Court removed itself to Aranjuez until the end of July, when it moved north across the Guadarramas to La Granja (San Ildephonso). In October, the Court returned south to the Escorial, and thence to Madrid in December. ³

Where the Court repaired, there also the diplomatic corps had to follow. Aranjuez and the Escorial were at least within easy reach of Madrid, but the move to La Granja necessitated a complete household removal. Rochford complained that the journey was "long and inconvenient," involving the hire of extra carriages "for the quantity of Baggage it is so necessary to transport to a Town where the Common Necessaries of Life are not to be found." ⁴

Rochford was assiduous in paying his court to the Spanish King and royal family, despite these inconveniences, and his attentions did not go unnoticed. At La Granja in 1764, Rochford noted that the King was "remarkably gracious" towards him, and the Queen Mother promised to set the fountains playing whenever Rochford had a mind to see them. ⁵

2. C. Kany, Life and Manners in Madrid 1750-1800 (1932), p.144.

3. SP 94/166, f.229, Rochford to Halifax, 30 April 1764 ; SP 94/167, f.170, Rochford to Halifax, 11 June 1764 ; Kany, op.cit. pp.138-9.

4. SP 94/167, f.244, Rochford to Halifax, 16 July 1764.

5. SP 94/167, f.244, Rochford to Halifax, 16 July 1764, No.15.

Rochford's earliest impressions of the Court at Madrid, however, were not at all promising. He lamented in a private letter to Sandwich "the dreadful dullness of this place which exceeds all description ; it has even infected the foreign ministers who live more unsociably than the Spaniards . . . nothing in Nature can make this place tolerable." He went on to entreat Sandwich to "think of an absent friend . . . whenever any opportunity offers of getting me from here." His first preference, as at Turin, was of course the Paris embassy.⁶

The social highlight of Rochford's first year at the Spanish Court, just as it had been at Turin, was a royal marriage. A treaty of 8 October 1759 had settled outstanding territorial anomalies in northern Italy between the Courts of Madrid, Vienna, and Naples, and to set the seal on this agreement, the Austrian Archduke Leopold was to marry a Spanish infanta, and take Tuscany as his establishment, to which he would succeed on the death of the Emperor Francis I. Rochford managed to see a copy of this treaty early in January 1764, and found that the terms involved the yielding of the reversion to Parma by the Court of Vienna to Don Philip and his heirs, for which Spain yielded her claim to the allodial lands of the Medici. Naples in turn ceded to Tuscany her half of the Presidii.⁷

Though ratified by all parties, these cessions had not yet been made ; the marriage was delayed by the war, and by Vienna's quibbling over the terms. The Archduke Joseph had protested that

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6. Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence 1763-1765, edited by F. Spencer (Manchester, 1961), pp. 125-126 ; Rochford to Sandwich, 13 January 1764.
 7. SP 94/166, f. 37, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764, Secret and Separate ; A. Ballesteros y Beretta, Historia de España y su influencia en la Historia universal (2nd edition, Madrid, 1964), VIII, 176.

he would be left without a single foot of land if the Empress survived her husband, as seemed very likely. Vienna offered to marry Joseph to the Spanish infanta instead, but the King of Spain disliked what he called this "Tripotage." Finally, Maria Theresa promised to nominate Joseph co-regent if she survived Francis ; this satisfied Joseph, and cleared the way for Leopold's espousal to proceed. ⁸

After another last-minute delay, caused by the death of an Austrian Archduchess, the entry of the Imperial ambassador into Madrid to demand the infanta's hand was fixed for 11 February 1764, and for this occasion the Spanish Court returned to Madrid from the Pardo on 10 February. ⁹ In giving notice of his ceremonial entry, Count Rosenberg asked Rochford to send his coach to swell the procession into the city. But Rochford declined this invitation, as he foresaw that difficulties over precedence could arise with the French and Neapolitan ambassadors, who claimed special favour as ambassadeurs en famille. The Sardinian ambassador Roubion followed Rochford's lead in this matter, and likewise declined to send his coach. Rosenberg later told Rochford privately that he fully understood the awkwardness of their situation, and had not expected them to do otherwise. ¹⁰

Rochford's formal Instructions had stressed the importance of guarding the honour due his rank and his monarch ; as a result, Rochford was constantly alert not to expose his embassy to any

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- . SP 94/166, f.37, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764, Secret and Separate ; W. Coxe, Memoirs of the Kings of Spain of the House of Bourbon (London, 1815), III, 292-3.
 - . SP 94/165, f.211, Rochford to Halifax, 22 December 1763 ; SP 94/166, f.54, Rochford to Halifax, 19 January 1764.
 - . SP 94/166, f.96, Rochford to Halifax, 13 February 1764 ; Bodleian Library, Oxford ; Lyell MSS, Empt.37 ; Rochford's Madrid Notebook, f.9.

public disadvantage. In fact, Rosenberg's invitation was the first of three decisions regarding precedence which Rochford had to make in connexion with the royal espousals. His response to each of these problems was of considerable importance in setting the tone of his embassy at Madrid.

The second and more difficult problem arose over one of the entertainments given by the Spanish King to mark the impending espousals, namely, an evening of plays at the Opera House on 13 February. Normally on such occasions, each foreign ambassador would be assigned his own box in the theatre, but a few days before, Grimaldi paid a call on Lady Rochford and informed her that he had set aside a box for the use of herself and the Venetian ambassadress. Rochford himself was expected to share this box in his wife's name. Grimaldi explained this as an etiquette of the Spanish Court that ambassadors who had not made a public entry could not be given a box of their own. Rochford at once made enquiries amongst the diplomatic corps, and soon discovered that the French and Neapolitan ambassadors had been given their own boxes, though they had "not made public Entries any more than me." The reason given was that they were ambassadeurs en famille, and were held to have made their entries to the King in his private apartments. While admitting that the King was maître chez lui at a private audience, Rochford felt that "at a public Theatre" and "upon a solemn occasion" for the British ambassador to be seen in any other than his own box would be a disgrace to his country's honour. Rochford confided to his notebook ; "Mr Keene submitted to this but in my opinion he did wrong." Rochford therefore stayed away, despite his love for the theatre, and the Sardinian and Venetian ambassadors did likewise. ¹¹

11. SP 94/166, f.124, Rochford to Halifax, 27 February 1764 ; Bodleian, Lyell MSS, Empt.37 ; Rochford's Madrid Notebook, f.9.

Rochford nevertheless attended the entertainments of the next two days associated with the Imperial ambassador's formal demand of the infanta (14 February) and the signing of the marriage contract (15 February), for these did not involve any ceremonial awkwardness, consisting chiefly of fireworks displays at the Buen Retiro palace followed by "gala with uniform."¹² The King and his ministers were just as affable as usual to Rochford, but not a word was spoken of his absence from the theatre.¹³

Rochford's third important decision regarding precedence concerned the espousal ceremony itself, held in private in the "Great Glass Room" of the Buen Retiro on 16 February, when the Prince of Asturias acted as Leopold's proxy in his sister's espousal. The ambassadors were naturally invited as witnesses. Rochford's notification advised him to stand to the left of the altar, but at the palace, he suspected that "they intended again to trick us" into making a distinction by placing the family ambassadors on the right with the royal family, and relegating the remainder of the ambassadors to the left. Rochford felt "It was a sort of Triumph I could not consent to give the ambassadors of the Family Compact." He waited until the Imperial ambassador and the Papal Nuncio began to move to their places, then,

"as soon as I saw them move, I followed them & took along with me the Sardinian & Venetian ambassadors, and put the latter above us, which shewed we all stood without any Ceremony. When they saw that, the Nuncio told us we should be of the other side of the Table [sic], but we paid no regard to what he said. The Guards then gently offered to make us go of the other side of the Table, but

12. Bodleian Library, Oxford ; Lyell MSS, Empt.37 ; Rochford's Madrid Notebook, fos.8-9.

13. SP 94/166, f.124, Rochford to Halifax, 27 February 1764.

when they saw I was determined not to move they let us alone, & so we carried our point, & in this whole Ceremony the family ambassadors have been mortified & disappointed."

This was the account Rochford recorded in his private Notebook ; in his dispatch reporting the affair, he merely observed, "I mixed with the others & was immoveable." ¹⁴

In taking this bold step, Rochford was aware that he ran a grave risk of offending the Spanish King. It might have been argued that the espousal was a private family ceremony, and Rochford had already granted that the King was maître chez lui at such times. Yet the presence of the diplomatic corps definitely made it a public event, and Rochford felt that the occasion demanded bold action ; " It is not my Turn to be over-scrupulous on these Points, but it is particularly essential here to support the Dignity of [one's] Character." ¹⁵

The francophile party at Madrid promptly dubbed the British ambassador "Turbulent" and "impétueux" ; but Rochford was relieved to find that Charles III did not resent his action. After the ceremony, the King was "remarkably civil," Rochford thought, and at the fireworks display that evening at the Buen Retiro, the King called Rochford to join him at the window, "that I might see the Fireworks the better," while Ossun remained with the other ministers. In their conversation at the window, the King remarked that he was sorry not to have seen Rochford at the Opera House a few nights before, but he "expressed a satisfaction"

14. Bodleian Library, Oxford ; Lyell MSS, Empt.37 ; Rochford's Madrid Notebook, fos.10-11 ; SP 94/166, f.124, Rochford to Halifax, 27 February 1764.

15. SP 94/166, f.124, Rochford to Halifax, 27 February 1764.

when Rochford assured him that he had been well entertained at all the other functions. From this, and from the comments of his friends at Court, Rochford gathered that Charles III "was not displeased at my Firmness on this Occasion," and the King's continued affability in the week of festivities which followed, until the Court returned to the Pardo on Saturday 25 February, gave Rochford no cause for disquiet.¹⁶ But he was not completely free from anxiety until he received a dispatch from Halifax conveying George III's full approval of Rochford's action, and his support for any similar steps thought necessary in the future.¹⁷

Rochford needed to assert himself as British ambassador a little more than most, for the odds he faced at Madrid were very considerable. His most important task, in a European context, was to neutralize as far as possible the influence of French counsels at the Spanish Court, and to explore any possibility of weaning Spain away from the Family Compact. Stated as simply as this, the task was well-nigh impossible. The foundations of British influence at Madrid in Keene's time had been undermined by the death of Carvajal in 1754 and the Diplomatic Revolution of 1756, but their collapse is more precisely marked by the death of Ferdinand VI and the succession of Charles III in 1759.¹⁸ Charles had little personal affection for England after his humiliation by an English fleet at Naples in 1742, and even less after the war of 1762.

16. Bodleian Library, Oxford ; Lyell MSS, Empt.37 ; Rochford's Madrid Notebook, f.11.; SP 94/166, f.100, Rochford to Halifax, 20 February 1764 ; *ibid.*, f.124, Rochford to Halifax, 27 February 1764. On "l'ardent ambassadeur" see F.P. Renaut, "Etudes sur le pacte de Famille," *Revue des Etudes des Colonies Françaises*(1922), 239-242.

17. SP 94/166, f.139, Halifax to Rochford, 27 March 1764.

18. D.B. Horn, Great Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century, p.294.

He deeply resented Britain's extensive trading privileges in Old Spain, and her contraband activities in Spanish America. Much as he disliked being represented as the auxiliary or lackey of France, there was for Spain no practical alternative to the Family Compact at this time ; Charles sought friendship outside the Compact with the Court of Vienna, for the sake of his Italian interests ; he saw Britain in the guise of adversary rather than friend.

Rochford had earlier lamented the strong position enjoyed by the French ambassador Ossun at Madrid as an ambassadeur en famille. Ossun was moreover a personal friend to the King, having been French ambassador at Naples ; Charles had sought his transfer to Madrid at the time of his own succession to the Spanish throne, since he disliked change in his immediate entourage. ¹⁹ Assisting Ossun at Madrid was the able and intriguing French Consul-General, the Abbé Béliardi, ²⁰ and for a time early in 1764, they were joined by Louis-Gabriel de Conflans, who held a roving commission to bolster French influence at the various courts he visited. ²¹

Perhaps even more significant than this strong core of French influence was the unmistakably francophile attitude of Grimaldi, Charles's new Foreign Minister. Grimaldi's friendship and direct correspondence with Choiseul ensured a constant pressure of French ideas and opinions on the Spanish King. Charles was aware of Grimaldi's intense devotion to French interests, and no doubt properly cautious of his advice, yet he treasured Grimaldi as his most able minister by far, and was to rely on him more and more.

19. Petrie, King Charles III of Spain, pp.95-96.

20. P.Muret, "L'Abbé Béliardi et les relations commerciales de la France et de l'Espagne (1757-1770)", Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine, IV (1902-3), 657-672.

21. Rochford heard that Conflans had his own cipher and corresponded direct with Choiseul ; SP 94/166, f.83, Rochford to Halifax, 6 February 1764.

Yet at the very start of his embassy, Rochford's prospects for neutralizing French influence at Madrid were not entirely dark. Grimaldi was new in office, and his arrogance on arrival in Spain had offended many. Most observers thought his position isolated and insecure at first. The leading members of the francophile party Wall had put about him -- Masserano, Fuentes, Aranda -- had all received appointments to foreign embassies or to the provinces.²² Indeed, Mme Squilaci whispered to Rochford one evening that she wished there was another vacancy open in the provinces, "and then, says she, adieu to Grimaldi's French friends."²³ In the promotions for the royal espousals, Grimaldi fully expected to receive the Golden Fleece, but was disappointed, even though the King made the selections secretly and by himself.²⁴

Furthermore, Grimaldi showed a tendency towards verbal indiscretion, not uncommon in those who are insecure and anxious to establish themselves. Rochford found it not at all difficult to draw Grimaldi out in their earlier interviews. Perhaps the most striking example of this is available from March 1764. Grimaldi remarked to Rochford that Spain had no other views than to hold what she was left with and to improve her trade, adding that they had no plans to recover their few remaining losses in the last war. Rochford, "in order to pique him and make him talk a little more," asked in mock innocence whether Grimaldi could be sure that France held the same attitude. Grimaldi immediately leapt up and fetched

22. Aranda succeeded Rochford's old Turin friend de Sada as Governor of Valencia, and Fuentes left for Paris after much reluctance and many delays on 28 January 1764 ; SP 94/166, fos.54, 69, Rochford to Halifax, 19 and 30 January 1764. Masserano was of course at London ; Rochford warned Halifax of an Irish priest in the embassy acting as a spy, and later warned that Masserano was "very particular" in his reports of conversations with Halifax ; SP 94/166, f.202, Rochford to Halifax, 2 April 1764 ; Nassau Papers, E/5, Rochford to Halifax, 7 July 1764 Private (not in SP).

23. SP 94/166, f.160, Rochford to Halifax, 20 March 1764.

24. SP 94/166, f.124, Rochford to Halifax, 27 February 1764.

a letter which he said he had just received from Choiseul, and proceeded to read part of it out aloud. Rochford noted what he thought was a "very remarkable Expression," in which Choiseul stated that France was "so bent upon pacifick Measures" that she would suffer everything, "jusqu'à des coups de Baton inclusivement," rather than go to war again. ²⁵

Rochford guessed that this disclosure had been designed expressly for his ears, to reassure him in case of any movement of troops to America. But Rochford remained convinced that Grimaldi did not personally share such peaceful asseverations ; "the French through him mean to engage this Court by degrees to strengthen themselves, and prepare for what may hereafter happen." ²⁶ This was as succinct and accurate a summary of Choiseul's policy regarding Spain's role in his planned revanche against England as the French minister could have made himself. ²⁷

There is no evidence to suggest that Rochford for a moment deluded himself with vain hopes of diverting Grimaldi from his devotion to France, nor of some grand coup by which Spain would be split from French influence and the Family Compact broken asunder. ²⁸ Rochford was much too realistic to indulge in such fantasies. But he did at least do what little he could towards that end, and by far his most promising ally in combating Grimaldi's influence over the King of Spain was the Minister for War and Finance, Squilaci.

25. SP 94/166, f.160, Rochford to Halifax, 20 March 1764.

26. SP 94/166, f.161-2, Rochford to Halifax, 20 March 1764.

27. See Ramsey, Anglo-French Relations, 1763-1770 (Berkeley, 1939), pp. 149-150, quoting Choiseul's 1765 mémoire justificatif.

28. As at least one writer assumes ; F.P. Renaut, "Études sur le Pacte de Famille," Revue des colonies françaises (1922), p.239, claims that Rochford "comptait parmi ces hommes qui espéraient rompre l'alliance franco-hispanique."

In addition to the expected jalousie de métier between the two most powerful ministers in the King's government, there was also a personal dislike which Squilaci did not trouble to hide. As Minister of Finance, Squilaci had much cause to resent the ruinous expense of the war, for which he unreservedly blamed the French. Rochford gathered from the other members of the diplomatic corps that the French ambassador Ossun had, for this reason, shown great friendship towards Squilaci during 1762, but that with Grimaldi's arrival, had neglected Squilaci and reported to his court that minister's declining favour.²⁹ It was therefore only natural that Squilaci should welcome the arrival of the British ambassador. Indeed, he treated Rochford in "the most confidential Manner" from the outset of his embassy. Rochford ventured, "from the freedom with which he talked," to sound Squilaci as to Grimaldi's situation and prospects early in February 1764. Squilaci thought Grimaldi's tenure was then still fairly precarious ; "that Minister must be very cautious of what he does."³⁰

By the following month, an uneasy equilibrium had been established in the Spanish ministry. Squilaci's credit with the King, eclipsed by Grimaldi's arrival, had again "greatly risen," and as Rochford became more friendly with Squilaci, Ossun resumed his former attentions ; Rochford thought, in fact, that Ossun paid "the most servile court," and when he pointed this out to Squilaci, the minister replied "in his blunt manner" that he would not be caught like that again.³¹

29. SP 94/166, f.160, Rochford to Halifax, 20 March 1764.

30. SP 94/166, f.88, Rochford to Halifax, 13 February 1764.

31. SP 94/166, fos.161-2, Rochford to Halifax, 20 March 1764.

Squilaci represented Rochford's sole effective means of redressing the preponderance of French influence at the Spanish Court, and neutralizing the effect of Grimaldi's direct correspondence with Choiseul :

"Squilaci, who does not love Grimaldi, is aware of all this, and by his means I hope to be able to administer a Counter-poison ; I must do him the justice to say he still acts in the most confidential manner with me, and has certainly at present the greater credit with the Catholick King, whilst Grimaldi on the other hand loses ground." ³²

Grimaldi was himself aware of his vulnerability at this time. On one occasion when Rochford was dining at Grimaldi's house in March 1764, somebody mentioned a matter which the minister would need to attend to in the next year or two, and Grimaldi remarked with a smile ; "If I am still in the same Situation, which is doubtfull." ³³

It only remained to be seen how successfully Grimaldi established himself in power, and whether or not Squilaci could retain a greater share of influence with the Spanish King. The best that Rochford could do was to watch them very closely and give Squilaci his full support.

Rochford had little enough support of his own at Madrid. Though he had readily achieved a personal friendship with the Duke of Losada, perhaps the most influential of the leading courtiers, Losada carefully avoided political entanglements. He was first and foremost the King's man, and would no more dream of championing Rochford's cause than he would that of Grimaldi or Squilaci. ³⁴

32. SP 94/166, fos.161-162, Rochford to Halifax, 20 March 1764.

33. SP 94/166, f.162, Rochford to Halifax, 20 March 1764.

34. Petrie, King Charles III of Spain, pp.60, 65, 98.

Amongst Rochford's few natural allies within the diplomatic corps at Madrid, the Dutch minister, Doublet, was unquestionably reliable, but he had little or no influence at Court. The Portuguese ambassador was not to arrive in Madrid until December 1764, and in the meantime Rochford's principal ally and supporter ought to have been the Sardinian ambassador ; yet even Roubion proved a disappointment, notwithstanding his earlier friendship with Rochford at Turin.

The reasons for Roubion's desertion Rochford chose not to include in his reports to the Secretary of State in London, but he did confide them to his Notebook. Rochford found that Roubion had been encouraged by his own court, from their jealousy of the favour shown to the Imperial ambassador during the recent royal espousals at Madrid, to attach himself to the French ambassador, as a gentle hint to the Spanish King not to neglect Turin. Roubion, however, observing that Rochford was "privately well with Squilaci," went a step further and began to court Grimaldi as well, even though that minister had neglected and ill-treated Roubion on his arrival at Madrid. Rochford being a shrewd observer of human nature did not fail to note another motive besides political considerations ; "add to all this a woman's reason ; Roubion is piqued against Madame Squilace who supplanted him for Doublet." ³⁵ There was obviously little chance of that friendly unity which Rochford might have desired between the Dutch and Sardinian representatives.

By the end of April 1764, when the Court removed itself to Aranjuez, Rochford must have felt somewhat bereft of supporters, and his reliance on Squilaci as his means of administering an

35. Bodleian Library, Oxford ; Lyell MSS, Empt.37 ; Rochford's Madrid Notebook, fos.187v-186v (about March 1764, judging from the items on either side of this entry).

antidote to Grimaldi's French influence became all the more crucial. Rochford attended Court regularly at Aranjuez, and "watched, as narrowly as I possibly could, both the Spanish ministers." The sojourn at Aranjuez was usually an opportunity for the ministers to discuss financial, economic and colonial matters, and to formulate policies for the coming year. Grimaldi and Squilaci were therefore in almost daily conference, assisted by General Wall. Rochford found no change in the behaviour of the two ministers towards himself, but was anxious to note that Wall and Squilaci, formerly enemies, now dined together in great familiarity.³⁶ Rochford also noticed that Wall spent much of his time with the Imperial ambassador Rosenberg, but whenever Rochford attempted to sound the ex-minister, Wall avoided "talking upon any Thing of Consequence," though he remained "extremely civil."³⁷

The hot summer months of 1764, during which Rochford continued to watch the ministers closely, were in fact dominated by quite another matter, equally serious for the British ambassador.

On 10 May, Rochford reported hearing whispers from a usually reliable source that France and Austria had concluded an offensive and defensive alliance, and had invited Spain to join. Rochford had suspected from the close rapport among Grimaldi, Wall, and Rosenberg, that something of this kind might be afoot, especially since Ossun was again on good terms with Rosenberg.³⁸ At the reading of the Austrian marriage contract in February, Rochford had

36. SP 94/167, f.14, Rochford to Halifax, 10 May 1764 (his first full report from Aranjuez).

37. SP 94/167, f.14, Rochford to Halifax, 10 May 1764.

38. SP 94/167, f.14, Rochford to Halifax, 10 May 1764 ; see also V.L. Brown, Studies in the History of Spain, pp.21-22, on Ossun.

been startled to hear mention of a secret Convention made between Madrid and Vienna in December 1762, which nobody had heard of before, not even the French ambassador. Rochford guessed at the time that it related to the royal marriage, and saw it as a product of Wall's policy of rapprochement with Vienna, which Grimaldi had adopted with enthusiasm. ³⁹

Rochford was apprehensive that this was the sort of policy over which Squilaci and Grimaldi might agree, and that Charles III would readily follow their united advice in this matter, since it accorded with his own personal preference for closer friendship with Vienna. Rochford therefore dropped a hint to Squilaci that such an extension of the Family Compact would only tie Spain's hands yet more tightly ; Squilaci promptly replied, "Do not believe it, for there is not a Word of Truth in it." ⁴⁰

Even so, by the end of May, Rochford was sure that his original information had been accurate, and that some sort of tripartite negotiation was afoot somewhere, probably at Paris, to judge from the frequent arrival and departure of French messengers at Aranjuez. The behaviour of Ossun and Rosenberg, and of the Spanish ministers, seemed to confirm this notion ; they were all very close and secretive, even Ossun and Grimaldi having reconciled their earlier differences. ⁴¹ Nevertheless, Rochford did his utmost to fathom the attitude of the Spanish Court ; as he remarked in a private letter to Sandwich, "no ferret took more pains than I have done." ⁴²

39. SP 94/166, f.160, Rochford to Halifax, 20 March 1764.

40. SP 94/167, f.14, Rochford to Halifax, 10 May 1764.

41. Rochford later discovered that Ossun and Grimaldi had been initially on such bad terms that Choiseul had offered to have Ossun replaced, but Grimaldi feared that his credit with the King was not secure enough for such a step ; SP 94/168, f.96, Rochford to Halifax, 17 September 1764.

42. Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence, 1763-1765, edited by F. Spencer, pp.162-163, Rochford to Sandwich, 30 May 1764.

Rochford doubted if anything had yet been decided by the Spanish King, despite the confidential behaviour of his ministers ; "if I know them at all they appear too uneasy to have carried their Point as yet." He was rather inclined to think that Charles III would be reluctant to commit himself further "so soon after an expensive and I may add ruinous war." Rochford thought that he would assure the other two powers that while he did not wish to be committed more openly at this time, they could depend upon him "quand le cas arrive." If he was persuaded to join another treaty, Rochford was sure it would be for the sake of Vienna rather than Versailles ; such a move by Charles III would be almost in spite of rather than because of French pressures at the Spanish Court. Even so, Rochford heard that France intended offering Corsica as a bait, to be attached to Tuscany following the latest agreement with Genoa over the control of that turbulent island. If this scheme succeeded, Rochford thought, then "adieu to the Équilibre of Italy," for the King of Sardinia would be sure to protest. This prospect at least had the effect of bringing Roubion back into Rochford's circle. As Rochford rather cynically observed ; "Trimming would be useless now, he honors me therefore at present with his Confidence, . . . I shall make a proper use of him." ⁴³

Early in June, Secretary of State Halifax wrote from London to inform Rochford that his informations from Paris and Vienna tended to confirm Rochford's suspicions ; "some sort of treaty is well advanced if not already concluded." These reports differed greatly in detail, but the general conclusion seemed to be that Vienna had made overtures to be included in the Family Compact, but had been rejected by the French, whereas the Spanish Court was

43. SP 94/167, f.48, Rochford to Halifax, 30 May 1764.

very willing to see Vienna included, as a counter-balance to French impetuosity.⁴⁴

Before the end of June, Rochford had found an opportunity to question Grimaldi on the rumours of a treaty in progress, reminding the minister that hitherto he had not pestered them with enquiries. Grimaldi assured Rochford that the King had noted and approved Rochford's "prudent Behaviour" in this respect. Grimaldi then proceeded with this remarkable observation :

"Nothing would embarrass us so much as the Court of Vienna desiring to accede to the Family Compact, for on the one hand, we wish, on many Accounts, to be well with that Court, which alone can support His Catholick Majesty's Son and Brother in Italy, but the Family Compact is an Affaire de Coeur, and not an Affaire Politique ; the Moment any other Power, that is not of the Family, accedes to it, it becomes a political Affair, and would alarm Europe, which is the farthest from our Thoughts, for I would have the Peace last, if possible, these Twenty Years . . . "

Rochford was not deceived by this hypocritical concealment of the French rejection of Vienna's overtures, but he conceded that "the Reasons he gives are real ones ; They will not alarm Europe mal-à-propos." Rochford was sure that while something was definitely afoot, "Their Attempt was discovered in the very Beginning," and the time had been judged not ripe for such a scheme. For if Europe had taken alarm, and another war ensued, Rochford knew that Spain would not be ready ;

"Their Troops are in a miserable condition ; their Fleet worse ; and their Coffers empty ; They cannot even, without the greatest Difficulty get money to pay the Archdutchess's Fortune . . . "

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44. SP 94/167, fos.25, 60, Halifax to Rochford, 8 and 15 June 1764.

45. SP 94/167, f.199, Rochford to Halifax, 25 June 1764.

He was, however, equally convinced "that They propose to put Themselves in a Condition [sic] as soon as possible They can ; Monsieur Choiseul to my certain Knowledge preaches that Doctrine to them." In the meantime, while not openly admitting Vienna to the Compact, the three Courts of Vienna, Madrid, and Paris "mean to unite more closely and only wait for the proper Opportunity to shew themselves." 46

Thus the scare of an enlarged Family Compact had passed by the middle of 1764. Early in July, Squilaci again assured Rochford that there was no truth in the rumours of a treaty afoot ; he took Rochford by the hand, saying that when there was any likelihood of such measures, "I will be the first to inform you." 47

Knowing how advanced the talks at Paris had been before the project was called off, Rochford recognized this assurance as his first warning that he could not rely on Squilaci as a counter-weight to Grimaldi. His hopes to use Squilaci as an advocate for British interests now seemed doubtful, at the very time that Grimaldi and his faction were attempting to exasperate the King against Britain, and encouraging Masserano to act the part of a "Firebrand" in London. 48

Rochford retained a private hold over Squilaci, however, since he knew of a transaction between the minister and Ossun

46. SP 94/167, f.199, Rochford to Halifax, 25 June 1764 ; see also SP 94/167, f.228, Halifax to Rochford, 24 July 1764, SP 94/168, f.9, Rochford to Halifax, 6 August 1764 Separate ; also, Coxe, Memoirs of the Kings of Spain (1815), III, 293-4. The best and most detailed account of this tentative negotiation appears in J.A. Lalaguna Lasala, "England, Spain, and the Family Compact, 1763-1783," (unpublished Ph.D.thesis, University of London, 1968), pp.90-107.

47. SP 94/167, f.214, Rochford to Halifax, 8 July 1764.

48. SP 94/167, f.246, Rochford to Halifax, 23 July 1764.

in 1762 which, if revealed, would ruin both of them. This ensured if nothing else that Squilaci would continue to confide in Rochford, but it was no guarantee that he would champion a British point of view in council with Grimaldi and the King.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Squilaci was anxious to placate Rochford's doubts and fears. Early in August, after a conversation in the minister's office, Squilaci assured Rochford in a whisper (for fear that he should be heard by his secretaries, who were in the next room), that he alone knew the King's real intentions, and that he did not intend "to be deceived any more by the French Court," nor to show towards France even a fraction of the commercial favours enjoyed by Britain.⁵⁰

Rochford was prepared to accept this particular assurance, since he knew from other sources that Charles III had "declared various times to those he is in confidence with, that nothing but his being attacked should engage him to draw his Sword." But he doubted if any of the ministers really knew the King's mind, or could persuade him against his better judgment. Rochford also doubted if secret treaties were much to the taste of Charles III, "who is, I believe, as upright a Prince as ever sat on this Throne."⁵¹

But as for Rochford's hopes to use Squilaci as an antidote to Grimaldi's French 'poison,' by September 1764, these had faded completely, and Rochford was honest enough to admit defeat. In matters of foreign policy, Squilaci supported Grimaldi's pro-French line ; "they speak as one voice " observed a disappointed Rochford. Squilaci's defection to the opposite camp was not, however, very surprising, when one considers that his overriding anxiety at this

49. SP 94/167, f.214, Rochford to Halifax, 8 July 1764.

50. SP 94/168, f.23, Rochford to Halifax, 13 August 1764, Very Secret.

51. SP 94/167, f.214, Rochford to Halifax, 8 July 1764.

time was self-preservation. Rochford had learned that Squilaci was negotiating to purchase the Duke of Alva's estate in his native Sicily, in order to retire there. In Rochford's inimitable phrase, "he wants only to wind up his Bottom and be gone." But because he was hardworking and meticulous, understanding better than anyone else the labyrinthine Spanish finances, Charles III would not let Squilaci retire just yet. ⁵²

Rochford was not blind to Squilaci's weaknesses as a potential ally within the Spanish ministry. Being more anxious to keep his place than to pursue what Rochford termed "Spain's true Interest," Squilaci would never persist in any opinion if it did not meet with the King's approval. Furthermore, his ignorance of European affairs was notorious, so much so that in order "to make a figure in conference with his Master," he went about gathering random opinions from members of the diplomatic corps. Rochford was perhaps most disappointed to find that, of late, instead of himself, "the French ambassador has acted the part of Tutor." ⁵³

Rochford's gloomy conclusion was that French influence now ran unchecked ; "the Councils held at Versailles will be followed here." The only consolation was that Charles III would avoid being pushed into another war before he was ready ; "they are in too bad a Situation here to venture for the present." Here, Rochford hoped that Squilaci might at least exert a restraining influence, if only for his own preservation ; an untimely war would wreck his cherished retirement plans. Rochford could still play

52. SP 94/168, f.96, Rochford to Halifax, 17 September 1764 ; see also on Squilaci, Coxe, Memoirs of the Kings of Spain(1815), III, 315.

53. SP 94/168, f.96, Rochford to Halifax, 17 September 1764.

on Squilaci's fears in this respect, and Squilaci responded with a most accommodating attitude over Britain's trade privileges ; Rochford now found, "I seldom apply to him for anything, but I carry my Point ; for although Grimaldi and he are agreed in their Politicks there is still a Jalousie de M tier, which is the only Ground I have to work upon." 54

Over the remainder of 1764, Rochford ruefully observed "an entire harmony" between Grimaldi and Squilaci, with the result that Grimaldi "gains more Credit here than I could wish him." It was obvious that Grimaldi had emerged as the dominant minister, and Rochford could only hope that Squilaci did not follow his lead too slavishly. 55 But clearly Rochford's one slim chance of effectively opposing French influence at Madrid had evaporated, not from any fault or lack of tact on his part, but from circumstances largely beyond his control. He now echoed again the warning with which he had concluded his first masterly report from Madrid ; that a British minister in Spain faced considerable odds, so that if he did not succeed in fulfilling his instructions as readily or as fully as desired, this should be assigned to the difficulty of his situation rather than to any lack of zeal or diligence on his part. 56

The early part of 1765 gave heartening evidence, however, that French counsels did not always have their way with Charles III, much less with the intensely nationalistic 'Old Spanish' party. The officers in command at the loss of Havana in 1762 had been on trial for the unforgivable crime of surrendering to the King's

54. SP 94/168, f.96, Rochford to Halifax, 17 September 1764.

55. SP 94/168, fos.187, 241, 261, Rochford to Halifax, 12 November, 10 December, 24 December 1764.

56. SP 94/168, f.96, Rochford to Halifax, 17 September 1764, repeating in almost the same words his closing remarks in SP 94/166, f.32, Rochford to Halifax, 13 January 1764, Most Secret.

enemies, and the French faction at Madrid, urged on by Choiseul, had been pressing for very severe sentences, even including the death penalty, pour encourager les autres. The principal officers on trial included de Prado, the Governor of Havana, and Superunda, the former Viceroy of Peru, who had unfortunately happened to be at Havana on his way home to Spain at the time of the British attack. Even Aranda, one of the militaristic old grandees, favoured severe sentences, by which he meant the death penalty. But de Prado was related to Losada, who protected him, and Superunda was protected by Ensenada, who even went so far as to set one of his servants to spy on Aranda's movements. This servant was in fact arrested, and for a time Ensenada was paralysed by the fear that Aranda would use this incident to disgrace him. The servant kept quiet, however, and nothing came of it. The fact that only a very small circle of people knew of this incident testifies to the excellence of Rochford's sources of information at the Spanish Court. 57

The sentences on the officers of Havana were at last published in March 1765, and while they were severe enough, extending to banishment and confiscation of estates, nobody suffered the death penalty. Rochford discovered that the Council had been evenly divided over this ; three (including Aranda) voted for the death penalty, three for banishment and confiscation, and one for acquittal. It was thought that the King had made known he did not favour excessively severe sentences. The French party was distinctly disappointed in this affair. 58

Despite Rochford's own disappointment over Squilaci, perhaps the only significant reverse of his Madrid embassy, there was no lapse in the British ambassador's customary diligence.

57. SP 94/169, f.209, Rochford to Halifax, 28 February 1765.

58. SP 94/170, f.14, Rochford to Halifax, 7 March 1765.

The latter part of 1764 and the early months of 1765 were dominated for Rochford by a temporary crisis over the massing of Spanish troops on the border with Portugal, and by the continuing negotiation over the British cutters of logwood in Honduras, to both of which he made significant contributions. All the while, Rochford gave constant attention to commercial matters involving British subjects and British interests. These major themes of his Madrid embassy are discussed elsewhere.⁵⁹

In addition to these major concerns, Rochford did not scorn the mundane tasks of his embassy. His alertness is instanced from April 1764, when he observed "as I was looking over some of the Gazettes that were published here during the War," an article of December 1762 which was couched in surprisingly strong terms. Since Britain had no representative in Spain at that time, Rochford enclosed a copy of this article, as serving to show the sentiments of the Spanish ministry in wartime, in case Halifax had not seen the item before.⁶⁰

The unending business of diplomacy then as now is the gathering, assessing, and transmission of information, some of which may not seem important by itself, but could take on greater significance when compared with news from other sources. Not all of Rochford's information came from his society friends at Madrid ; the eighteenth-century diplomat worth his salt did not scruple to use spies and agents to gather secrets.⁶¹ It was presumably, however, by more respectable means that Rochford uncovered a most remarkable plot during the summer of 1764, and reported his

59. the Portuguese scare is discussed later in this chapter ; for the Honduras logwood negotiations, see Chapter 10 ; for his attention to commercial matters, see Chapter 11.

60. SP 94/166, f.229, Rochford to Halifax, 30 April 1764.

61. One of Rochford's spies at Madrid was apparently known as Jean Boudet ; the catalogue for the sale of Rochford Papers at Sothebys, 16 December 1930, mentions this man's correspondence under lot 448 (p.74) ; "being a spy's secret reports to Rochford."

discovery in time to prevent its execution. It was a French plot, aimed at destroying Britain's vital naval installations at Portsmouth and Plymouth, but Grimaldi at least among the Spanish ministers appears to have been privy to the scheme, as Rochford made clear in his first report of 17 September :

"I have learnt that about three weeks since, Grimaldi received a letter from Choiseul, telling him that every thing was ready ; and in his answer, which was sent by the last Spanish messenger who went to London, Grimaldi, after approving the scheme, added, the sooner it is put in execution the better.

The scheme is this : two french engineers were sent to England in June last ; they went to Portsmouth and Plymouth ; staid some time ; and returned to France. They are since returned to England ; and are now there. They reported to M. de Choiseul, that they had gained, by bribery, the necessary people to assist them, some of whom are English. In short, that in the dark nights, between the 1st and 15th November, the shipping and dock yards both at Portsmouth and Plymouth would infallibly be destroyed, and that they had invented a new kind of fire for that purpose.

I would not willingly give credit to so diabolical a design, but I can see no reason to doubt my friend's intelligence. He heard Grimaldi relate the whole to his intimate and bosom friend Masones, [62] who was formerly ambassador [sic] at Paris ; and has further told me, that it has since been confirmed to him." 63

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62. presumably this was Grimaldi's predecessor in the Paris embassy, Jaime Masones de Lima y Sotomayor, who was Spanish ambassador to France 1752-61 ; Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Landen, II. Band (1716-1763), edited by F. Hausmann (Zurich, 1950), p.387.
63. Rochford to Halifax, 17 September 1764 (not in SP), printed in Coxe, Memoirs of the Kings of Spain of the House of Bourbon (1815), III, 298. Coxe describes this as Rochford's "Most Secret" dispatch of that date, but Rochford's own subsequent references to this letter describe it as his "Most Private by Potter" (the messenger). This would account for its not having been preserved in SP 94. Archdeacon Coxe gives his source simply as "Rochford papers, MS" ; undoubtedly a draft in the Rochford Papers then at St Osyth, the use of which Coxe acknowledges in his Preface.

Early in October, Rochford noted that the Spanish King had received a letter from Louis XV himself, but after twice reading it had burned the paper ; Rochford related this occurrence to the intelligence he had sent by Potter on 17 September. But at the end of his dispatch reporting this, Rochford added an excited postscript. He had just received confirmation of the original intelligence, with the additional news that the attempt had been postponed on account of the moon until the latter end of November. The materials, however, were all ready and lodged in private houses near the dock-yards. ⁶⁴

Fortunately (to quote Archdeacon Coxe), "the vigilance of Lord Rochford discovered the plot, and the precautions of our government deterred the incendiaries from making the attempt." ⁶⁵ It was not until December that Rochford himself knew that the attempt had been called off. His friend at Court heard that "the french perceived we had found them out, & M. Grimaldi had been reproached by Choiseul that the affair had been discovered here." The fire-works remained undiscovered, however, and it was hoped that another opportunity to use them would soon present itself. ⁶⁶

But nothing happened before Rochford's final report on this subject in February 1765, in which he was at last able to give the name of the original projector of the scheme, an Englishman named Milton, and the names of the householders at Portsmouth and Plymouth who had concealed the fire-works. ⁶⁷

64. SP 94/168, f.136, Rochford to Halifax, 8 October 1764.

65. Coxe, Memoirs of the Kings of Spain, III, 299.

66. Bodleian Library, Oxford ; Lyell MSS, Empt.37 ; Rochford's Madrid Notebook, fos.180v-179v ; intelligence dated 12 December 1764.

67. SP 94/169, f.207, Rochford to Halifax, 25 February 1765, Secret & Private. Rochford's first reports had been given serious attention, though it was hoped this was a false alarm ; see Sandwich to Bedford, 13 November 1764, in Bedford Correspondence, edited by Russell (1846), III, 270-272.

With this information, the plot was well and truly exposed, and nothing came of it, at least not immediately. But the threat was no idle one, for in July 1770 there was a serious fire in the Portsmouth dock-yard, which destroyed many important buildings and a vast quantity of stores. It was remarked that this fire spread with unusual rapidity, and foul play was suspected, though never proven. This may well have been a revival of the attempt which Rochford had nipped in the bud in 1764.⁶⁸

Apart from this exceptional piece of preventive intelligence-gathering, Rochford's attention had for its main focus the military preparedness of the Spanish forces; her naval strength, the condition of her army, and the size of her garrisons in the Americas. Rochford's Instructions had made this particular responsibility very clear, and his first reports in January 1764 were reassuring in their rather slighting estimation of Spanish armed might.⁶⁹

The only serious gap which Rochford had noted in his information at that time was the absence of any report from Cartagena. Consul Bomeester finally arrived at his new post in February 1764, and made his own report direct to London regarding Spain's Mediterranean squadron. There was little cause for alarm in his report, which stressed the poor condition of the ships and the crumbling shore defences.⁷⁰

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68. London Magazine, XXXIX (1770), pp.429-430 ; report of 27 July (the fire occurred that morning). A second fire of December 1776 is better known, but this was clearly the work of a lone pyromaniac known as John the Painter ; see his Deposition in The Correspondence of George III, edited by J. Fortescue (1927-8), III, 423-427 ; see also Horace Walpole, Journal of the Reign of George III (London, 1859), II, 100, which shows that Rochford for one viewed it seriously.
69. See above, pp.215-216.
70. SP 94/166, f.154, Bomeester to Halifax, 18 March 1764 ; the report is in fos.156-159. See also, SP 94/167, f.29, Bomeester to Halifax, 27 May 1764.

Nevertheless, in June 1764 Rochford sent his Chaplain de Visme to Cartagena to make as close an inspection as possible of the installations and the shore defences. The result of this visit was a detailed report which discussed sources of timber and supplies for the shipbuilding yards as well as enclosing an up-to-date list of the warships stationed there. The shipyard had benefited greatly from the services of an English shipwright, who had introduced various chain-pumps and machines, but he was still handicapped by the scarcity of timber. That of Catalonia was almost exhausted, and what remained was of poor quality and tended to crack in the sun. As a result, timber "is got with great difficulty and at a vast expense." In desperation, Spain had recently contracted with some Genoese builders who had access to a large stock of good timber from the Adriatic to build six ships of the line at Cartagena over the next few years, for what Rochford thought was a very reasonable price. Hemp was readily available in good quality and great quantity from Valencia, and Cartagena itself supported "a considerable manufacture of Sail-cloth"; only masts and planks had to be imported. Of the seven ships of the line based there, one had just sailed for Naples, and two of the remainder were in dock in poor condition. By far the larger part of the naval forces in readiness at Cartagena were Xebecs and Galliot. ⁷¹

Rochford was not the only foreign ambassador at Madrid interested in Spain's naval strength ; Ossun, the French ambassador,

71. SP 94/167, f.208, Rochford to Halifax, 8 July 1764 (embodying de Visme's report) ; the list of vessels is f.213. There is an interesting item in the collection of W.S. Lewis of Farmington, Conn., U.S.A. (the Lewis-Walpole Library, Yale), in Rochford's hand, entitled "Verses to be added to our Clerkes Characters of the Spanish Court" (presumably an untraced private account by de Visme). The couplet, "Alone he strays admires the Towering Bark / & leaves his King & Country in the dark," seems distinctly undeserved in view of this very full report of 8 July.

also had instructions to report regularly on Spanish military readiness, as a guide to Choiseul's plans for the revanche against England. However, Ossun tended to be somewhat generous in his estimates. Before the end of 1764 he confidently predicted that Spain would shortly have a total naval establishment of at least sixty ships of the line and forty frigates.⁷² Choiseul, however, had other sources of information from Spain, notably the French Consul-General Béliardi, and tartly corrected the ambassador : "You are poorly informed . ." His own most optimistic estimate amounted to only thirty-six ships of the line and thirty frigates.⁷³

Rochford's estimates of Spanish naval strength, based on information from the various British Consuls, accorded remarkably closely with Choiseul's estimate, namely, about thirty-four ships of the line and a corresponding number of frigates. The total naval establishment in the Americas Rochford believed did not amount to more than sixty vessels, large and small, but only half of these were capable of being outfitted for action. Rochford stressed that numbers alone were no true estimate, and that the Spanish navy was in a poor condition from the scarcity of experienced sailors. Spain had a very small merchant marine, having let her carrying trade slip into the hands of the Dutch, French, and British ; the latter two also had the advantage of the Newfoundland fisheries, that great 'nursery of sailors.'⁷⁴

72. France ; Archives Etrangères ; Correspondance Politique, Espagne 541, Ossun to Choiseul, 31 December 1764 ; quoted in R.E. Abarca, "Bourbon 'Revanche' against England ; the Balance of Power, 1763-1770," (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, 1964), pp.198-9. See also, Ramsey, p.160.

73. AECP Espagne 542, Choiseul to Ossun, 15 January 1765 ; quoted in Abarca, pp.179, 199.

74. SP 94/167, f.199, Rochford to Halifax, 13 May 1764 ; SP 94/171, f.150, Rochford to Halifax, 6 September 1765. See also SP 94/172, f.132, Bomeester to Conway, 9 November 1765.

The King of Spain was fully aware of the poor condition of his navy, and according to one report reaching the British embassy in Madrid, had instructed Grimaldi to write to "his friend" Choiseul for an able ship-builder. Whatever the cause, a French engineer, M. Gautier, arrived in Spain early in 1765, and though he wore the uniform of an officer in the French Artillery, and frequented Count Gazila, the Spanish Master of Ordnance, he also professed expertise in naval architecture. Ossun went out of his way to inform Rochford that Gautier thought the Spanish navy in a very bad condition ; but this only aroused Rochford's suspicions, since Ossun was usually so reserved towards him. Rochford doubted if Ossun would have mentioned this fact if it were true, and therefore concluded that the French visitor had not found the navy quite as bad as he had expected. Nevertheless, Gautier expressed dissatisfaction with the English and Spanish designs in current use, and with French finance proceeded to lay the keels of three vessels at Ferrol which would serve as models of the French designs. ⁷⁵

Improvements in the Spanish navy were essential for the defence of Spain's American empire, since any future British threat to that area would best be met at sea. It was generally expected that any future conflict between Britain and Spain would commence, and probably be decided, in the Americas ; an earlier French visitor to Madrid, Conflans, had remarked to Rochford early in 1764 that "the first Gun, that should be fired, should be in America." ⁷⁶ On this assumption, Charles III had embarked on major reforms to strengthen Spain's colonial defences. ⁷⁷ Naturally, this gave Rochford yet another reason for vigilance.

75. SP 94/169, f.193, Rochford to Halifax, 18 February 1765, Separate ; SP 94/170, f.134, de Visme to Halifax, 13 May 1765.

76. SP 94/166, f.88, Rochford to Halifax, 13 February 1764.

77. See V.L. Brown, "Anglo-Spanish Relations in America in the closing years of the colonial era," Hispanic American Historical Review, V, No.3 (1922), pp.329-483.

Early in 1764 Rochford had been alarmed to hear of the appointment of a new Commander in Chief for Mexico, the Marquis de Villa Alba, who was to take with him some 2,000 men and officers. This looked like the start of substantial military reinforcements, but Squilaci assured Rochford it was merely a piece of reform, to bring the corregidores to heel who were cheating the Spanish King out of most of his revenue. Rochford's further enquiries tended to confirm Squilaci's assurance, and Grimaldi told him early in March that the present force was designed to replace rather than augment the existing forces, which had been decimated by desertion and become corrupt and expensive. By June 1764 this force had still not left for Mexico, though they were "getting ready with the greatest Expedition." Grimaldi at this time made much of his confidential offer to Rochford of a detail of the regiments that were to be sent ; Rochford in return made much of his gracious refusal, preferring to take this on trust ; in fact, he had already obtained this information and relayed it to London in March! ⁷⁸

There was no further news of note regarding Mexico until the middle part of 1765, ⁷⁹ but in the meantime Rochford reported whatever seemed to him sufficiently important to warrant mention regarding Spanish overseas interests. In March 1764 he submitted a detailed account of the works in progress to improve the fortifications at Havana, which included new forts at the Morro and Caranios, and an immense rock-cut fosse sixteen feet deep, to be flooded as a moat. ⁸⁰ Early in 1765, he also reported the rare

78. SP 94/166, fos.88, 144, Rochford to Halifax, 13 February and 12 March 1764 ; SP 94/167, f.199, Rochford to Halifax, 25 June 1764.

79. See below, Chapter 12.

80. SP 94/166, f.160, Rochford to Halifax, 20 March 1764.

occurrence of a Spanish ship sailing for the Philippines from Spain itself, with two French pilots on board. The intention was to survey a direct sea-route around Cape Horn, to avoid having to trans-ship the spices at Acapulco. Rochford observed that this strategy would make Spain even more jealous of Portugal in South America, but he rather doubted the success of the expedition ;

" I have so very bad an Opinion of Spanish Projects, that I can scarcely believe They will ever succeed in any Thing they undertake." ⁸¹

Rochford also kept a wary eye on French activities in the Americas. Early in 1764 he supplied what details he had been able to obtain about a French colonizing expedition to Cayenne under the Marquis de Roux. ⁸² But the topic of greatest interest to the English government at this time regarding Spanish America (apart from the Honduras logwood cutters) was Louisiana.

The French cession of western Louisiana to Spain at the time of the Peace of Paris had stimulated much speculation as to possible ulterior motives, and the likelihood that this remarkably generous gesture foreshadowed a reciprocal cession of Spanish territory sometime in the near future. It now seems fairly clear that an exchange was not intended, and that France was glad to be rid of what seemed a useless expanse of wasteland. ⁸³ But the British government suspected that Spain had secretly promised France an island somewhere in the Caribbean, or even substantial trade concessions with Old Spain, in compensation for the loss of Louisiana,

81. SP 94/170, f.53, Rochford to Halifax, 25 March 1765.

82. Nassau Papers, E/4, copy of an extract (in Porten's hand) from a letter to the Venetian ambassador at Madrid, 14 May 1764, is the source of Rochford's details in SP 94/167, f.34, Rochford to Halifax, 28 May 1764.

83. V.L. Brown, "Anglo-Spanish Relations in America . . .", Hispanic-American Historical Review, V (1922), pp.344-5.

and Rochford initially shared these suspicions. In February 1765 Halifax directed Rochford to find out all he could about the rumours still current in London that some sort of exchange between France and Spain was imminent. ⁸⁴

Rochford replied within a month, observing that he for one had always thought the Louisiana cession concealed something more than "a meer Act of Generosity." His vigilance had in fact only recently been stimulated by the arrival at Madrid of a French promoter, Daubaret, who was attempting to form a French trading company for Louisiana, to assist the Spanish in their development of the area. He had been heard to argue in private that Louisiana would decay under Spanish government unless assisted by French ingenuity. But he had at last gone away empty-handed. The "Old Spaniards" to whom Rochford had spoken on this subject were all convinced that France had simply unloaded a neglected and useless territory onto her ally. In addition, he heard that it had been proposed in Council to "make a Desart" of Louisiana, as a no-man's land between Mexico and British North America. Therefore, Rochford concluded,

"after the most Mature Examination (and I have taken great Pains to find out the Truth), I cannot believe this Court has or will yield any Thing to the French, in compensation for Louisiana." ⁸⁵

Rochford obtained most of his information about Daubaret from another French visitor, Beaumarchais the playwright, who was trying to obtain for France an asiento in slaves, with as little success. He and Rochford here established a lasting friendship. ⁸⁶

84. SP 94/169, f.110, Halifax to Rochford, 12 February 1765.

85. SP 94/170, f.18, Rochford to Halifax, 11 March 1765.

86. Bodleian Library, Oxford ; Lyell MSS. Empt.37 ; Rochford's Madrid Notebook, f.179v.

In addition to Spain's naval readiness and her colonial defences, Rochford kept a close watch on the Spanish army at home. Besides his information from spies and agents, Rochford had frequent opportunities to see for himself at least the better side of the army, for Charles III regularly invited him to watch military reviews and manoeuvres. At first, Rochford was not much impressed ; even the Royal Regiment of Carabineers, "esteemed the finest Regiment in the Spanish service," gave Rochford "but an indifferent Idea of the present State of the Spanish Cavalry" in June 1764.⁸⁷

Later that year, however, at a review on the plain between Segovia and San Ildephonso, the cavalry regiments were more complete, and in Rochford's opinion made a "fine Appearance." A week later, as part of the same manoeuvres, Rochford witnessed in company with the King and Royal Family a mock assault on a fortified camp ; he was greatly impressed, and remarked upon the improvements wrought by Count Gazola on the Spanish artillery. The Ordnance was in a very bad condition when Rochford first arrived in Spain, but since Gazola had been entrusted with its reform, it had become better than ever before in its history.⁸⁸

Having witnessed these manoeuvres in October, Rochford assembled his best information regarding Spain's military strength. His list numbered 102 infantry regiments, a total of 72,590 men, and 78 squadrons of cavalry, amounting to 11,192 men. These were impressive figures, but Rochford emphasised that many of these regiments were incomplete, and that the whole regular army numbered

87. SP 94/167, f.170, Rochford to Halifax, 11 June 1764 ; see also SP 94/168, f.64, Rochford to Halifax, 2 September 1764.

88. SP 94/168, f.136, Rochford to Halifax, 8 October 1764 ; SP 94/168, f.139, Rochford to Halifax, 15 October 1764.

probably no more than 50,000 effectives, not counting local militia.⁸⁹

The accuracy of Rochford's estimate may be checked alongside French intelligence reports. Ossun, as remarked earlier, tended to inflate his totals and give a healthier impression of Spain's readiness than was usually the actual case. In December 1764 he reported that the regular army now totalled effectively 80,000 infantry and 14,000 cavalry. Choiseul's other sources of information led him to correct the ambassador sharply, for they gave the totals of effective forces as 45,000 infantry and only 8,000 cavalry ;⁹⁰ remarkably close to Rochford's estimate of about 50,000 effectives.

In the course of his watch on the Spanish army, Rochford noticed with increasing alarm throughout September and October 1764 the movement of a number of regiments towards the Portuguese border. Consul Forrester at Barcelona also noticed and reported these movements.⁹¹ Besides the march of regiments, Rochford also discovered that stores of corn were being stockpiled at Burgos in Old Castile, and that troops were to be stationed there ; this was not so close as to cause alarm, but still within easy reach of the northern frontiers of Portugal.⁹²

By the end of October, Rochford's fears were thoroughly aroused, and he devoted a special dispatch to outlining the reasons for his fears. The movement of regiments across Spain could not be explained away as manoeuvres or routine replacements, as the Spanish ministers claimed they were, for the latest marches drew

89. SP 94/168, f.157, Rochford to Halifax, 27 October 1764 ; f.159 is the "State of the present military force in Spain."

90. AECP Espagne 541, Ossun to Choiseul, 31 December 1764 ; AECP Espagne 542, Choiseul to Ossun, 15 January 1765 ; quoted in the Abarca thesis (see above, note 72), pp.198-199.

91. SP 94/168, f.134, Forrester to Halifax, 6 October 1764.

92. SP 94/168, fos.136, 139, Rochford to Halifax, 8 and 15 October 1764.

regiments from Catalonia, the cheapest province in Spain for winter quarters, to Estremadura, perhaps the most expensive at this season of the year. Furthermore, although the harvest had been plentiful, corn was very scarce ; the government was buying up all it could, and even bringing in extra supplies from elsewhere.

Rochford's guess was that the Spanish planned to fall upon Portugal by surprise in the depths of the winter, if there was any sign of renewed war with Britain. Rochford wondered if the stockpiled corn were not intended to feed French reinforcements in such an event. The Spanish army itself was clearly being increased ; Rochford noted that they were recruiting "with great Diligence" at Madrid, and that several cavalry squadrons were being augmented. ⁹³

Within a few weeks, however, quite unexpectedly, all this activity ceased ; the regiments on the march were halted, and higher ranking officers were given leave extending in some cases to May instead of February of the new year. Rochford concluded from the arrival of three French couriers in ten days (one courier being Choiseul's own valet) in an air of great secrecy, that France had called off the warlike preparations, suspecting that their intentions had been discovered. In the meantime, Rochford had seen the original of the paper from which his first information had come ; it confirmed that the plan had been to attack Portugal in the winter, before any assistance could arrive from England. ⁹⁴

Halifax was very pleased at this news, and warmly commended Rochford for his vigilance. He had himself kept the Portuguese

93. SP 94/168, f.157, Rochford to Halifax, 27 October 1764, Separate & Secret.

94. SP 94/168, f.187, Rochford to Halifax, 12 November 1764.

ambassador in London fully informed of Rochford's reports. Halifax also mentioned another possible reason for the Spanish pause ; the new Portuguese ambassador to Spain, Count Ayres de Sà de Mello, was at last ready to set out for Madrid. Rochford was to show de Sà every friendship, and give him his fullest support. ⁹⁵

The Portuguese ambassador arrived at Madrid on 3 December 1764, and immediately assured Rochford that he was instructed to enter into "the closest Confidence" with his British counterpart. The Spanish Court, "from highest to lowest," paid de Sà the utmost attention, but the ambassador gave no sign that he was even aware of the Spanish plans to invade Portugal, though to Rochford "nothing in the World was ever clearer." ⁹⁶

Rochford's continued enquiries revealed that two French contractors for armaments and provisions had been told to stop their dealings and return home, which seemed to indicate that the scare was over for the time being. Rochford also delightedly reported that one of his informants at Court had heard that Choiseul reproached the Spanish ministers for having let slip their plans, and in return, Grimaldi had retorted the same accusation against the French. Though Grimaldi remained very affable towards Rochford, and held a peaceful tone, Rochford gathered that he was "much out of Humour" over this affair ; "The Discovery of their Scheme has disconcerted all their Measures" ; and Grimaldi had written asking Masserano in London to find out where the 'leakage' had occurred. ⁹⁷

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95. SP 94/168, f.227, Halifax to Rochford, 18 December 1764 ; see also Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller L nden, II. Band (1716-1763), edited by F. Hausmann (Zurich, 1950), p.289, for de S .
96. SP 94/168, fos.239, 241, Rochford to Halifax, 3 and 10 December 1764.
97. SP 94/168, f.261, Rochford to Halifax, 24 December 1764, Secret.

In fact, the rumours that some sort of danger was threatening Portugal at this time had become widespread amongst diplomats and ministers at most European capitals ; as far away as Vienna, Stormont discussed them with Kaunitz, who thought that France and Spain would do well to remain quiet, since neither was ready for another war. Rochford's anxiety may at first have been a trifle alarmist, although it was his duty to treat seriously such an important possibility as an attack on Portugal. Nevertheless, by January 1765, his own thoughts coincided with those of Prince Kaunitz, albeit unknown to either : "they will through Necessity be quiet for the present." 98

The last few weeks of December 1764 were taken up with a round of dinners in honour of the newly arrived Portuguese ambassador, but in between times Rochford managed to have several talks with de Sà, who seemed "a very discreet sensible Man" ; he told Rochford that he had orders "not to take any one Step" without consulting Rochford first. His Instructions related chiefly to the basic cause of ill-feeling between Spain and Portugal, namely, Brazil. 99

Spain's few successes in the war of 1762 had been virtually confined to South America, where several Portuguese forts and outposts on the Rio de la Plata had been overrun by Spanish forces.

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98. SP 94/169, f.49, Rochford to Halifax, 9 January 1765, Secret & Separate ; SP 80/202, Stormont to Sandwich, 26 January 1765, printed in Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence 1763-1765, edited by F.Spencer (Manchester, 1961), pp.276-277 ; Dr Spencer's comment that "Rochford was inaccurate and alarmist in his reports" seems not entirely fair when viewed alongside Rochford's judicious 9 January report.
99. SP 94/168, fos.258, 266, Rochford to Halifax, 17 and 31 December 1764.

Though Portugal was not formally a party to the Peace of Paris in 1763, Britain had ensured on her behalf that Spain and France agreed to withdraw from all Portuguese territories overseas, restoring matters "sur le même Pied où Elles étoient" in accordance with earlier treaties.¹⁰⁰ However, reports from Rio de Janiero indicated that the Spanish had restored only Nova Colonia, and moreover had recently stopped all border traffic between Brazil and la Plata. The main purpose of de Sà's embassy was to insist on the restoration of the remaining forts and territories which Portugal claimed to possess before the outbreak of hostilities.¹⁰¹

In order to achieve this end, de Sà was instructed to present three Notes to the Spanish ministry, at regular intervals, and if there was no prompt response, the third and final Note was to threaten further hostilities. The Portuguese ambassador hoped for Rochford's support in all this, and asked if he would join the first submission, making it a joint protest by Britain and Portugal. Rochford, however, very properly and cautiously declined this invitation, pointing out that he was not authorized to take such a step, and reassuring de Sà that he could probably do more to help behind the scenes than if he were involved in a formal submission. De Sà thereupon submitted his first Note alone.¹⁰²

Halifax commended Rochford for his caution in this respect, as well as his support and friendship towards de Sà ; but such an important step as a joint submission should not be made without

100. Article 21, the definitive Treaty of 10 February 1763 ; printed in Z.E. Rashed, The Peace of Paris 1763 (Liverpool, 1951), p.225.

101. For further details see V.L. Brown, Studies in the History of Spain (1930), pp.63-69 ; F.P. Renaut, "Etudes sur le Pacte de Famille," Revue des Colonies Francaises (1922), pp.97-98 ; Coxe, Memoirs of the Kings of Spain, III, 297-8, 305-307.

102. SP 94/169, f.49, Rochford to Halifax, 9 January 1765, Secret & Separate.

specific orders from London, on the King's own authority.

Rochford himself promised Halifax that he would use all the caution "an Affair of this delicate Nature requires." 103

For a time it was indeed a delicate affair at Madrid, with a certain amount of backstairs intrigue between the Spanish ministers and the French ambassador. Ossun openly expected war ; he accosted Roubion at Court early in January and ended their conversation with the cryptic expression, "le Pot bout !" Roubion at once mentioned this to Rochford, who asked Roubion to find another opportunity to draw Ossun out on this topic. Within a few days, Roubion had done so, and confirmed Rochford's impression that the French ambassador fully expected the present tension between Spain and Portugal to result in another war. Rochford suspected that Choiseul was pressing the Spanish ministry to adopt an intransigent attitude in hopes of provoking such a conflict. Rochford was determined to use his influence with de Sà to thwart such schemes. After closer acquaintance, Rochford had concluded that "Monsieur de Sà is a very good and a very sensible Man, but not one of the brightest ; He is however very tractable as well as prudent, and entirely disposed to follow my Advice." 104

Grimaldi was aware of Rochford's influence with de Sà, ^{how} and anxious to know/the British ambassador viewed the situation between Spain and Portugal. Having already set his cousin the Nuncio to sound Roubion on this matter, Grimaldi now sent the Venetian ambassador to talk to Rochford, who was most amused when

103. SP 94/169, f.64, Halifax to Rochford, 1 February 1765.

104. SP 94/169, f.49, Rochford to Halifax, 9 January 1765, Secret & Separate.

Mocenigo began in a "very awkward Manner to pump me [sic] about the Affairs of the Brasils." Rochford gave him an answer he hoped Grimaldi would recognize as being designed for him rather than the Venetian ambassador. This had the desired effect, and within a few days Grimaldi at last broached the subject to Rochford himself, in his coach, whilst taking Rochford to dinner at his (Grimaldi's) house. 105

Grimaldi began by charging the Portuguese ambassador in London, Mello, with "blowing up the coals" over the movement of Spanish troops near the border with Portugal, which, he assured Rochford, was merely the routine changing of garrisons. After some further discourse on this theme, he turned to Rochford and said,

"unless you force us into Measures that are repugnant to us, by supporting the unjust demands of the Court of Portugal, Nothing upon Earth can make us quarrel with you."

Immediately after dinner, Rochford called on Squilaci, and found him "as usual, very open." He too begged Rochford to believe that they were determined to remain quiet. He then paid Rochford a very handsome compliment, stating "that such was the King of Spain's Confidence in me, that He would leave me to be the Arbiter of the Portuguese Proposal." (In his report to Halifax, Rochford apologized for the apparent vanity of repeating this, but thought it necessary for his information.) All this Rochford found a trifle disconcerting;

"Such solemn Asseverations on one hand, and such ill appearances as have been on the other, are, I must own, a little embarrassing ; but from all I can combine, They are, in my Opinion, determined, if possible, to accommodate Matters with the Court of Portugal ; and the extraordinary Court both the Spanish Ministers make to me at present is,

105. SP 94/169, f.49, Rochford to Halifax, 9 January 1765, Secret & Separate.

I am persuaded, meant to induce me to soften the Portuguese Minister, as well as to make a favourable report . . . of their Intentions here." 106

Rochford in fact intended to use his 'softening' arts on Grimaldi himself, hoping that he would serve de Sà more effectually this way than "by openly or violently espousing his Cause." This proved to be the case within a week of Grimaldi's assurances to Rochford in his coach. Grimaldi was annoyed by what he termed the unjust demands contained in the Portuguese Note about Brazil, and in a "violent Passion" told Rochford they would not be talked into an "Entorse" or twisting of the article in the Treaty of Paris relating to Portugal. Rochford had some trouble calming him, but finally brought the minister to discuss the matter "reasonably and moderately." 107

The Portuguese ambassador was naturally anxious and impatient for a reply to his Note ; Rochford personally thought the delay was occasioned by its reference to Paris, and that de Sà would have to wait upon Choiseul's opinion. However, de Sà was bound by the timetable of his own Instructions, and had to submit a second Office before the end of the month. He was very much alarmed to hear that Grimaldi was busy examining earlier treaties, because his Instructions forbade him to enter into any sort of discussion before the disputed forts had been restored. De Sà was so fearful of declaring this before he had an answer to his first Note, that he felt himself in a dilemma. He was so anxious and worried that Rochford offered to draft the Note for him, carefully worded so that it went no further than was strictly necessary. De Sà readily

106. SP 94/169, f.61, Rochford to Halifax, 14 January 1765, Separate.

107. SP 94/169, f.108, Rochford to Halifax, 21 January 1765.

and gratefully accepted this offer, and submitted Rochford's draft over his own name ; Rochford was gratified to hear later that this Note "had been much approved of." 108

Grimaldi then fairly promptly replied to de Sa's first Note, in a long and detailed Office which argued chiefly that Nova Colonia was the only one of these settlements held by Portugal at the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), even then under blockade, and that the other settlements were subsequent encroachments on Spanish territory. Grimaldi also pointed out that the delay in restoring Nova Colonia was simply because Spain was waiting for Portugal to fulfil her part of an agreement of 1760 revising an earlier Convention of 1750, relating to this area. Nevertheless, Spain was resolved to abide by the peace treaties, and would willingly enter a negotiation to clarify and settle the points in dispute. 109

The Portuguese ambassador was at first greatly upset that this reply appeared so unsatisfactory in terms of his own Instructions ; Spain was obviously bent on that which de Sa had been asked to avoid, namely, a protracted negotiation. Rochford at once wrote a hasty reassurance to de Sa, promising to help all he could ; "je ferai tout ce qui dépend de moi." 110 De Sa replied generously, convinced that the Spanish answer might have been worse but for Rochford's good offices with the Spanish ministers on his behalf. There was nothing to be done in the meantime but refer the paper to Lisbon, and await fresh instructions. 111

108. SP 94/169, f.114, Rochford to Halifax, 28 January 1765.

109. SP 94/169, f.161, copy, Grimaldi to de Sa, 6 February 1765.

110. Nassau Papers, E/8, draft, Rochford to D.Ayres de Sa y Mello, 9 February 1765.

111. SP 94/169, f.158, Rochford to Halifax, 9 February 1765.

Rochford hoped to exert some influence on the Spanish ministry by means of Squilaci. Though Grimaldi was by now beyond doubt the leading minister, especially in foreign affairs, Squilaci retained the King's favour and was consulted privately by Charles III on all important matters, such as this regarding Portugal. Rochford saw a useful opening here ; "as he [Squilaci] is easily frightened I shall have opportunities of encreasing his fears without committing myself." Grimaldi naturally echoed Choiseul, and Rochford privately thought that Spain's next moves would depend entirely on whether or not Choiseul judged the moment opportune for war or not. ¹¹²

As the early months of 1765 slipped by, it became increasingly obvious that neither Choiseul nor Pombal, the chief minister of the Portuguese King, Joseph I, cared to press the issue more strongly at this time. To his immense relief, de Sà was advised to take no further steps until instructed to do so, which was the usual indicator that a crisis point had passed for the time being at least. As late as May, when feeling in Madrid still ran very high against Portugal, de Visme heard that Choiseul had urged the Spanish ministers to let the situation cool down, and to abide very strictly by the terms of the peace treaty. With this, it was concluded that the crisis was indeed over. ¹¹³ Nova Colonia continued under virtual blockade, but the remainder of 1765 saw a gradual thaw in Hispano-Portuguese relations, with an increase of civilities on both sides. Rochford's small contributions towards smoothing a potential flash-point had not been wasted. ¹¹⁴

112. SP 94/169, f.158, Rochford to Halifax, 9 February 1765.

113. SP 94/170, f.98, Rochford to Halifax, 15 April 1765 ; SP 94/170, f.148, de Visme to Halifax, 23 May 1765.

114. V.L. Brown, Studies in the History of Spain (1930), pp.67-70.

The passing of this brief alarm regarding Portugal also conveniently marks the close of the earlier phase of Rochford's Madrid embassy, after which he departed for six weeks' leave in Paris in April 1765. While he had been extremely busy for much of the time in his first year and a half in Spain, Rochford does not appear to have enjoyed his sojourn there nearly as much as his previous ministry at Turin. His initial impression of the dullness of the Court and of social life at Madrid found no cause for alteration. The Rochfords were plainly glad of the company of the visiting French playwright-to-be, Caron de Beaumarchais, from May 1764 to March 1765, who in large measure compensated for the lack of English visitors to Madrid ; unlike Turin, there was no constant stream of people on the Grand Tour at Madrid. Beaumarchais naturally relied chiefly on the hospitality of the French ambassador for his meals, but his evenings he divided chiefly between the Rochfords and the vivacious Russian ambassadress, Mme Buturlin. ¹¹⁵

In spite of the improvements instituted by Charles III, Madrid was still not a healthy place in which to live, and the rigorous climate further tested those of weaker constitution. Rochford himself lay dangerously ill from "the Madrid Cholick" for ten days in August 1764, during which time Squilaci alone of the Spanish ministers came to visit his bedside. ¹¹⁶

Life at Madrid agreed even less with Rochford's Secretary of Embassy, Colonel Ligonier. His health suffered a rapid decline in the first part of 1764, and he applied to be released from his

115. Cynthia Cox, The Real Figaro ; the career of Caron de Beaumarchais (London, 1962), pp.28, 71, citing (without references) a letter from Beaumarchais to his father ; on Mme Buturlin, see Rochford to Sandwich, 13 January 1764, Sandwich MSS, printed in Spencer's edition of the Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence (1961), p.125.

116. SP 94/168, f.44, Ligonier to Halifax, 20 August 1764 ; SP 94/168, f.54. Rochford to Halifax. 27 August 1764.

duties in order to return to England. Halifax granted him this leave in June 1764, but Ligonier was so far weakened by his illness that he did not finally leave Spain until September, after the hottest part of the summer was over. He carried dispatches to London for Rochford, and in a private note to Halifax paid tribute to Rochford's work at Madrid ; "Lord Rochford . . . has been indefatigable in promoting the King's Affairs." ¹¹⁷

The burden of Ligonier's work as Secretary of Embassy had fallen upon Rochford's Chaplain, de Visme, who was also the ambassador's private secretary. Though de Visme capably managed the paperwork of the embassy after Ligonier's departure, writing the body of all Rochford's official dispatches, he had no formal credentials as Secretary of Embassy, and could not therefore appear at Court or visit the Spanish ministers in Rochford's name on official business. Before the end of 1764, Rochford therefore applied for de Visme to be appointed Secretary of Embassy in place of Ligonier, who clearly had no intention of returning to Spain. But by March 1765, Rochford had to remind Halifax of his request, stating that he would not have mentioned the matter again, "if it did not become daily more and more necessary." ¹¹⁸

Rochford wondered if the fact that de Visme was also his Chaplain had delayed or obstructed a decision, but in a private letter to his friend Sandwich pointed out that Lewis Dutens, also a clergyman, was actually Charge at Turin. Besides, if this were

117. SP 94/167, f.204, Ligonier to Halifax, 25 June 1764 ; SP 94/168, f. 74, Rochford to Halifax, 10 September 1764.

118. SP 94/170, f.14, Rochford to Halifax, 7 March 1765.

a true objection, it ought properly to come from the Spanish themselves, and Grimaldi not only liked and approved of de Visme, but had "some time ago concluded it was done and wished me [Rochford] joy of it." 119

Sandwich and Halifax had in fact warmly supported Rochford's recommendation of de Visme, and the appointment had already been made ; notification had not yet reached Rochford in Madrid. But it had caused a certain amount of friction within the Ministry, for Grenville as Chancellor of the Exchequer had intended to suppress the Madrid Secretaryship of Embassy as an economy measure after Ligonier's return to England. Grenville was furious when he discovered that he had not even been consulted about de Visme's appointment, but George III upheld the decision of his Secretaries of State, and Rochford's Chaplain duly became his fully-accredited Secretary of Embassy. 120

De Visme was therefore able to act as Chargé during Rochford's absence on leave from April to June 1765, and for this purpose Rochford left with him detailed instructions on matters still under discussion with the Spanish government. Rochford's leave was occasioned by the deterioration of Lady Rochford's health, which had apparently suffered more from the hot climate at Madrid than it had even at Turin. She could stay no longer in Spain, and Rochford's leave was simply to accompany her as far as Paris, on her

119. Sandwich MSS, Rochford to Sandwich, 11 March 1765, printed in Spencer's edition of the Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence (1961), p.292.

120. D.B. Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives 1689-1789 (London, 1932), p.136, gives 23 January 1765 for de Visme's appointment, citing FO 90/62 ; but the Grenville Correspondence, edited by W.J. Smith (London, 1853), III, 119, has Grenville's angry reaction from his diary under 24 February 1765.

way home to England. It seems likely that she may have stayed in Paris for some time with friends, possibly on Rochford's own expectation that Paris might be his next appointment. ¹²¹

Lady Rochford had her audiences of leave with the King and Royal Family shortly before 18 April, the day on which Rochford presented de Visme at Court as the British representative in his absence. After final packing and farewells, the Rochfords set out on their journey to Paris on 20 April. Rochford expected to return to Spain by himself sometime early in June. ¹²²

121. Sandwich MSS, Rochford to Sandwich, 11 March 1765, printed in Spencer's edition of the Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence (1961), p.292.

122. SP 94/170, f.104, Rochford to Halifax, 18 April 1765 ; SP 94/170, f.108, de Visme to Halifax, 22 April 1765.

CHAPTER 10 : Rochford's Major Negotiations at Madrid ;
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Rochford's Major Negotiations at Madrid :
the Honduras Logwood-Cutters
and the Manila Ransom

The question of British logwood-cutters settling on the coast of Honduras, and the more complex dispute over the so-called Manila Ransom, were both troublesome legacies from the Seven Years' War and the Peace of Paris. From the British viewpoint, the Honduras logwood issue had been decided in Article 17 of the peace treaty, and with this strong support the minor disagreement of 1764 was fairly readily settled to Britain's advantage. By contrast, however, the Manila Ransom was not so much as mentioned in the treaty of 1763, and the dispute which arose in 1765 developed into a prolonged crisis, even threatening a renewal of hostilities, until, long after Rochford had left Madrid, the British government simply let the matter drop unresolved : a signal triumph for Spain.

Rochford fulfilled a key rôle in both negotiations. Indeed, his zeal and success in the Honduras logwood affair suggest a partial explanation for Spain's sternly intransigent attitude regarding the Manila Ransom. In tracing Rochford's work at Madrid to resolve these two disputes, this chapter sheds light not only upon Rochford's own abilities and shortcomings as a diplomat, but also upon his relationship with the Spanish ministers, and their relationship in turn with each other and with Charles III. In addition, the Manila episode sheds light on both French and Spanish policies towards Britain after the peace of 1763.

Camps and settlements for the extraction of logwood had been established by British subjects along the coasts and major rivers of Yucatan and Honduras since the early seventeenth century. This timber was then a major source of fixing dye for the textile industries of Europe, and made a profitable trade for the cutters and the privateers who transported their timber. The British settlers came chiefly from Jamaica, and were originally established in four main areas : in the Gulf of Campeche, especially around Laguna de Terminos (whence they were expelled in 1717) ; along the Yucatan Peninsula to Cape Cateche ; in the Bay of Honduras, with their main centre at Belize ; and finally to the south, along the Mosquito Coast, from Cape Gracias á Dios to the Rio San Juan. ¹

The logwood-cutters used African slave labour, yet were able to maintain better relations with the native Indians than the Spanish authorities, so that recurrent attempts by Spain to exert closer control over these areas were usually frustrated. Although the Spanish government continued to make occasional complaints about the presence of British interlopers, in practice the logwood-cutters were left unmolested for most of the time. Any attempts by Britain to gain recognition of the cutters' claims to settlement were, however, strenuously resisted at Madrid. ²

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1. See Appendix B for a Map showing the location of these areas.
 2. J.A. Burdon, Archives of British Honduras (London, 1931-5), I, 2-78 ; J.A. Calderon Quijano, Bélice, 1663(?) - 1821 (Seville, 1944), pp.1-50. I am grateful to Dr Juan Antonio Lalaguna for drawing my attention to these works, and to the discussion in his "England, Spain, and the Family Compact, 1763-1783" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1968), pp.123-126, which also cites A.M. Wilson, "The Logwood Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in Essays in the History of Modern Europe, edited by D. McKay (New York, 1936), and J. McLeish, "British activities in Yucatan and on the Moskito Shore in the Eighteenth Century," (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of London, 1926). I have not yet seen W.S. Sorsby, "The British Superintendency of the Mosquito Shore, 1749-1787," (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1969).

By the middle of the eighteenth century the logwood trade had suffered from over-supply and falling prices, encouraging some among the British settlers in Honduras to engage in contraband trade with Spain's colonial territories and to export mahogany under cover of the logwood. Both activities were not only highly illegal but also greatly offensive to the Spanish authorities, who lacked the means to curb them. It was therefore only to be expected that Spain should attempt to secure a stricter definition of the British presence in Honduras and Yucatan at the negotiations for the Peace of Paris during 1762. Spain's misfortunes in the war of 1762 put her in a weak bargaining position, however, and the British refused to be drawn into any such limitation, insisting rather on recognition of their claim to extract logwood from this otherwise neglected area of the Spanish empire.³

The final version of the article in the definitive treaty relating to Honduras is perhaps the most inconclusive in the whole document as regards territorial definition, though its recognition of the presence of British logwood-cutters on Spanish territory is clear and unmistakable. On condition that the cutters demolish the forts they had built "dans la Baye de Honduras, et autres lieux du territoire de l'Espagne, dans cette Partie du Monde," Spain guaranteed their right to continue cutting and extracting logwood without molestation "dans les dits Lieux."⁴

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3. Lalaguna, pp.128-133, has a full discussion of the negotiations ; see also Z.E. Rashed, The Peace of Paris, 1763 (Liverpool, 1951), pp.171, 180, and F.P. Renault, "Etudes sur le Pacte de Famille et la politique coloniale française, 1760-1792," Revue des Colonies françaises (1922), pp.72-74. For a wider perspective on the logwood issue, see also L.H. Gipson, "British Diplomacy in the light of Anglo-Spanish New World Issues, 1750-1757," American Historical Review, LI (1946), pp.627-648, and J. McLachlan, "The Seven Years' Peace," English Historical Review, LIII (1938), pp.457-477.
 4. Rashed, Peace of Paris, p.222 (text of the treaty, Article 17). Grimaldi later told Rochford that Bedford, as British negotiator at Paris, had been "as obstinate as a mule" ; hence the compromise phrase, "les dits Lieux." Bodleian Library, Oxford ; Lyell MSS, Empt.37 ; Rochford's Madrid Notebook, fos.184v-183v. (not in SP).

The treaty ruling was a distinct reverse for Spain ; within a month of receiving news of the peace, the logwood-cutters had returned to their accustomed camp-sites, and resumed work, after first dismantling their forts. Nevertheless, at Madrid, the Minister for the Colonies, Don Julian Ariaga, was determined to place as strict an interpretation as possible on the imprecise wording of Article 17, and sent orders to the Governor of Yucatan that he should keep a close watch on the British logwood-cutters, respecting their rights under the treaty in their accustomed places, but not tolerating any new establishments' encroaching further on Spanish territory. ⁵

The Governor of Yucatan, Don Felipe Ramirez de Esteñoz, had already satisfied himself that the cutters had demolished their forts. But in so doing, his officers had found newly established camps on the Rio Hondo, barely five leagues from the Spanish outpost at Bacalar. Acting in the spirit of Ariaga's instructions, Ramirez sent a small deputation to the Rio Hondo early in February 1764, warning the cutters that unless they could produce a cedula from the Spanish government or a licence from their own government authorizing their presence there, then they should immediately retire to Belize. On 23 February, the Commander at Bacalar, Don José de Rosado, on his own initiative threatened the cutters both at the Rio Hondo and at Rio Nuevo further along the coast with forcible eviction. At this, the cutters and their dependants, some 500 people in all, hastily withdrew to Belize, abandoning valuable equipment and stores. ⁶

5. Lalaguna, p.133, citing Calderon Quijano, Bélice, 1663(?) - 1821, p.197. See also V.L. Brown, "Anglo-Spanish Relations in America in the closing years of the colonial era," Hispanic American Historical Review, V (1922), pp.359-360.

6. Lalaguna, pp.134-5 ; Brown, pp.360-362, citing correspondence in SP 94/167, fos.68-93. Coxe, Kings of Spain (1815), III, pp.296-7, cites a contemporary estimate of £ 27,000 for these losses.

From Belize, the displaced logwood-cutters sent a petition to the Governor of Jamaica, Lord Lyttelton, with copies of their correspondence with the Spanish authorities. Lyttelton was no longer at Jamaica, but the Commander in Chief, Sir William Burnaby, at once wrote to the Governor of Yucatan, and reported the whole matter to London. ⁷

Rochford first heard of these events at the start of July, when he received a bulky packet comprising further copies of the papers received from Jamaica. Halifax's covering letter of 15 June pointed out that the Spanish action was in blatant violation of Article 17 of the peace treaty, and requested Rochford to make the necessary representations to the Spanish government. Specifically, Rochford was to demand, politely but firmly, immediate orders to the Governor of Yucatan for the restoration of the British logwood-cutters to their rightful position. ⁸

Grimaldi agreed, when Rochford spoke to him on this matter, that the actions of the Governor of Yucatan and the Commander of Bacalar seemed unwarranted, and promised Rochford that orders would be sent at once to restore the cutters to their rights under the treaty. As a matter of form, he asked Rochford to submit this request in writing. Grimaldi's rejoinder to this Office repeated his promise to renew "the most strict Orders" that no one should disturb the logwood-cutters, but pointed out that the King still awaited the Governor's own report, and until this was received no action could be taken. ⁹

7. Brown, pp.361-2.

8. SP 94/167, f.60, Halifax to Rochford, 15 June 1764, enclosing copies of correspondence between Joseph Maud, spokesman for the cutters, Burnaby, Rosado, and Ramirez de Estenoz, with various testimonies and depositions (fos.68-93).

9. SP 94/167, f.214, Rochford to Halifax, 8 July 1764, enclosing copies of Rochford to Grimaldi, 4 July 1764, and Grimaldi to Rochford, 7 July 1764 (fos.218-222).

Rochford saw no cause for disquiet in this, and made his report of 8 July confident that the matter was as good as settled. It was, however, barely the start. A translation of Grimaldi's reply, which Rochford enclosed with this report, was promptly published in the London Gazette, where George Grenville, First Lord of the Treasury and head of the British Ministry, noticed the phrase that no one should disturb the logwood-cutters "in the stipulated Places." He immediately expressed some misgivings to Halifax, in a note of 23 July, that this wording held promise of further disputes with Spain over the definition and thereby limitation of the British cutting areas, which had been carefully avoided in Article 17 of the peace treaty.¹⁰

Halifax had already suggested to Rochford that he might drop a hint to the Spanish ministers regarding redress for the losses suffered by the dispossessed cutters, and disavowal if not indeed punishment of the Governor of Yucatan, "for a Proceeding so contrary to the Good Faith of Treaties, & destructive of the Publick Peace."¹¹ After receiving Grenville's note, Halifax now hardened this suggestion into formal instructions, and ordered Rochford to demand and insist upon immediate satisfaction and redress.¹²

With his usual enthusiasm, Rochford had virtually anticipated these sterner instructions by dropping the suggested hint in the form of a strongly worded Note which he handed to Grimaldi on 27 July. Not only did the Note demand redress and reparation for the cutters, together with disavowal and punishment of the Governor of Yucatan, but Rochford accompanied it with

10. Grenville Papers, edited by W.J. Smith (London, 1852-3), II, 409.

11. SP 94/167, f.176, Halifax to Rochford, 3 July 1764.

12. SP 94/167, f.228, Halifax to Rochford, 24 July 1764.

a little speech of "great Firmness," in which he reminded the Spanish minister that issues as apparently trivial as this had been the cause of more than one war in the past. Grimaldi listened with "uncommon Attention," and apart from complaining that Article 17 was very vaguely worded, ended the interview looking somewhat troubled. Rochford was not in the least alarmed that he might have overreached himself, for in his opinion, "There is Nothing they will not do to avoid quarrelling with Us at this Time." Later he heard that Charles III had "spoken very favourably" of Rochford's spirited conduct to both his principal ministers.¹³

Nevertheless, Rochford also thought that there would be no end of such differences and disputes until the cutting areas were more closely defined, for the Spanish ministers were, he found, convinced that the cutters wanted to operate only at those places most suitable for contraband trade. He felt sure that if Britain nominated more remote areas where the logwood was plentiful and "easily got," then the Spanish would prove very coöperative. Rochford had heard an anecdote at Court which related that during the war Charles III had in a moment of exasperation proposed setting fire to the forests in that part of the world to prevent all possible connexion with Britain there ; "which Scheme [Rochford observed] , tho' a very wild one, proves how prepossessed They are of our People's carrying on an illicit Trade, under the Pretence of cutting Logwood."¹⁴

Far from disapproving of Rochford's anticipation of his instructions to adopt a firmer line at Madrid, Halifax was delighted,

13. SP 94/167, f.253, Rochford to Halifax, 30 July 1764.

14. SP 94/168, f.5, Rochford to Halifax, 6 August 1764.

and so was George III. It is unusual to find any personal element in the letters issuing from the office of the Secretary of State to diplomats in the field, yet in his next letter to Rochford Halifax adopted an informal tone, and confessed his "great Pleasure" to have it in particular command to assure Rochford that the King fully approved his "firm and spirited, at the same time moderate and temperate Language" at Madrid. ¹⁵

Before this exceptional praise could make his ears burn, Rochford received Grimaldi's reply to his Note of 27 July. It was very brief, since there was still no report from the Governor of Yucatan, and while Grimaldi repeated Charles III's assurances to uphold Article 17, his main point was that it would be manifestly unjust to punish the Governor without hearing his version of the affair. Rochford recognised this as a device to buy time, and therefore drew Grimaldi into further discussion, in which Grimaldi inadvertently acknowledged that the Rio Nuevo was an old-established cutting site, unlike that on the Rio Hondo. Rochford pounced on this, and asked why the cutters at Rio Nuevo had been threatened as well with forcible eviction ; Grimaldi was embarrassed for a reply. ¹⁶

In fact, Grimaldi was just as anxious and impatient as Rochford at the delay in receiving the Governor's report. He had earlier complained privately to Rochford of the slowness which characterized the Department for the Indies, where the desired report was probably at that moment making its way through the usual labyrinthine channels. Rochford could well believe this, having already decided that Ariaga was "the most tedious as well as the most confused Man in his Ideas I ever met with." ¹⁷

15. SP 94/168, f.13, Halifax to Rochford, 24 August 1764.

16. SP 94/168, f.17, Rochford to Halifax, 13 August 1764.

17. SP 94/168, f.5, Rochford to Halifax, 6 August 1764.

The Governor's report did not in fact surface until the very end of August, and proved to be the anticlimax Halifax had prophesied. Rochford observed that it painted a markedly different picture from that contained in the correspondence between Mr Maud and the Spanish authorities, suggesting the utmost mildness and politeness in their exchanges, as if the cutters had themselves wanted to withdraw to Belize! The report reached Rochford as he was convalescing from a severe bout of the 'Madrid Cholick' which had confined him to bed for ten days during August, leaving him much weakened ; "my Head is not yet very fit for Business." He knew that Grimaldi had sent papers and maps to the Spanish ambassador in London in the meantime, intending to transfer the negotiation there and thus to increase the opportunities for delay, but Rochford also knew that Halifax was unlikely to countenance such a change, and therefore warned Grimaldi that he expected fresh instructions. ¹⁸

This surmise was soon justified. Rochford's earlier reports had convinced Halifax that a show of strength would have great effect, and that further delay would lose that advantage. There was no need for closer definition of Article 17, since the Governor had clearly contravened the treaty as it stood, whatever excuses his report offered, and since his action had not been disavowed at Madrid, it could only be assumed that he was approved. Rochford was again to demand immediate reparation, redress, and satisfaction, but this time with the threat that unless a prompt response was forthcoming, Britain would be compelled to take "proper Measures" to reinstate her subjects. This was no idle threat, for Cabinet meetings early in September authorized the

18. SP 94/168, f.60, Rochford to Halifax, 29 August 1764 ; the maps are earlier mentioned in f.17, Rochford to Halifax, 13 August 1764.

addition of two warships to the Jamaica squadron, and the despatch of orders to Burnaby to collect forces for the reinstatement of the British logwood-cutters on the coast of Honduras. ¹⁹

Rochford received his fresh instructions by special messenger on 11 September. He was clearly glad to be given such a positive directive, and relieved that he could now exert his efforts to the full, as his immediate comment to Halifax reveals : "now I will be responsible that this Affair shall be decided one way or another, for I am convinced that nothing but mischief can arise from its being suspended." He was as good as his word, and effectively resolved the crisis within a week of intensive negotiations. ²⁰

Both King and Court were away on a great 'partie de Chasse' on 12 September. so that Rochford did not see Grimaldi until the morning of the 13th. Convinced that the Spanish would do all they could to avoid a showdown, Rochford judged that "the more I frightened them, the easier I could carry my point," and he therefore began very briskly, accusing Grimaldi of drawing him into 'a Scrape' by trying to shift the negotiation to London. Upon reading out that part of Halifax's instructions which rejected this move utterly, Grimaldi "clasped his hands together, and the Tears came into his Eyes ; Good God, says he, how then can it ever be adjusted ?" Rochford's aggressive tone had greater effect than he had expected : "Finding this operate very strongly, I took a softer tone. . . ."

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19. SP 94/168, f.27, Halifax to Rochford, 30 August 1764 ; Lalaguna, p.139, for the Cabinet meeting of 2 September, citing EM Add MSS 35425, f.62 ; Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence, edited by Spencer (1961), pp.208-210 and 227 for the Cabinets of 5 and 21 September.
 20. SP 94/168, f.78, Rochford to Halifax, 17 September 1764, contains a daily journal for this week, 13 to 17 September ; it is printed extensively in Coxe, Memoirs of the Kings of Spain (1815), III, 300-304.

For two hours, Rochford and Grimaldi canvassed the basic issues raised by the logwood-cutters' expulsion. Rochford reminded Grimaldi that he still awaited a satisfactory answer to his Note of 27 July, and there was no conceivable reason for further delay now that a report had been received from the Governor of Yucatan. Grimaldi finally conceded that he was quite willing to let Britain have all that she claimed along the coast of Yucatan and Honduras, so long as there existed clear stipulations preventing any encroachments elsewhere, for example in Mexico. Since Britain claimed no right to go there, he could not quite understand her reluctance to have this stated plainly and publicly.

Grimaldi was then called away to Court. Rochford went with him, and afterwards they dined together, then visited the Queen Mother, before returning to Grimaldi's office to resume their talks. Rochford thought this indicated how seriously Grimaldi regarded the dispute ; "he does not like quitting his party of cards in an afternoon." Grimaldi attempted to distinguish between the spirit and the letter of Article 17, arguing that Britain's interpretation failed to accord with the literal sense of the clause. The difference, Grimaldi claimed, was that between an occasional privilege and the granting of a prior right.

At this, Rochford got up and said he was sorry to find that Grimaldi "stopped at such a trifle," for unless satisfaction was given at once, Britain would be obliged to take her threatened measures, and this would inevitably "sonner le tocsin de la guerre." Grimaldi was startled by Rochford's sudden bluntness ; "Vous avez raison, dit-il, et j'atteste Dieu que je ferai tout ce qui depend de moi pour l'éviter." In support of this assurance, Grimaldi

showed Rochford his latest letters from Paris, which he claimed demonstrated that France was as reluctant as Spain to pick a quarrel with Britain at this time. He pointed out a passage from one letter in which Choiseul remarked that they would settle all their differences except that of the Canada Bills ; Britain claimed so much it would be cheaper to go to war again! Having thus eased the moment of tension, Grimaldi suggested that Rochford submit a Précis of his instructions, which he could make use of with the King, and again promised to do his utmost to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

After this exhausting three hour discussion, Rochford and Grimaldi "came out . . . together arm in arm in the best humour that could be," to find the French ambassador in the next room playing cards with the other foreign ministers ; "he seemed greatly confounded at seeing such harmony between us," observed Rochford with a trace of impish delight. Next day, 14 September, Rochford gave Grimaldi the Précis he had requested, which was taken directly to Charles III. That afternoon, a Council was called for the following day, 15 September, and Grimaldi informed Rochford that he should have an answer for him on the 16th.

Rochford therefore decided to visit Squilaci on the morning of 15 September, before the Council met. Squilaci listened to Rochford's account of his talks with Grimaldi, then declared that Britain's demand had greatly alarmed the King, and that he (Squilaci) had done his utmost to soften their impact the day before. Rochford merely observed that now it would be seen whether Grimaldi's "Pacifick intentions were as sincere as he had always professed." At this, Squilaci took Rochford's hand and earnestly added, "Now I shall see if your intentions are serious or no! "

He then asked Rochford whether Britain would discuss the matter further if Spain disavowed the Governor and reinstated the logwood-cutters, "that you may not have an unlimited right to run over all America." Rochford could not answer this directly, knowing that Halifax wanted to avoid any closer definition of the British cutting areas, but he assured Squilaci that Spain ran no risk in settling the affront first, for even if Britain refused to discuss the matter afterwards, Spain could always warn them if the cutters trespassed too far. Squilaci saw that it would be fruitless and possibly dangerous for Spain to insist on clarifying talks as a condition of settling the present dispute, and he assured Rochford that he would do all he could at the Council meeting to preserve the peace ; "it will not be my fault if this Affair is not adjusted."

Immediately after the King's levee on 16 September, Rochford went to see Grimaldi for news of the Council's deliberations, and "a great deal of very warm debate" proceeded to occupy the morning. Grimaldi had been instructed at the Council to reply to the two main points of Rochford's Note of 27 July, namely, the disavowal of the Governor and the reinstatement of the cutters. Rochford interrupted here, pointing out that there was a third point as well, that of reparation for the losses suffered. From the information Halifax had sent him, Rochford had prepared another Office detailing the losses incurred, and now produced this paper. Grimaldi became highly agitated, and begged Rochford not to submit it, as it would aigrir les esprits and defeat the solution he had secured in Council. This solution was no less than a complete surrender by Spain on the first two points of Rochford's demand, and Grimaldi commenced drafting a letter of reproof to the Governor of Yucatan with Rochford looking on. It was a stern rebuke,

pointing out that he ought to have referred the matter to Madrid instead of taking steps which could have international repercussions, and instructing him to reinstate the cutters to their former sites immediately. Grimaldi then handed the paper to Rochford, who altered one or two expressions, then added another three lines himself ; "and let them know that they may return to their occupation of cutting logwood without disquieting or disturbing them under any pretence whatever." ²¹

Grimaldi promised Rochford a duplicate of this letter as an effective answer to his Note. Rochford reminded Grimaldi that there was no mention of reparations, yet his own orders were to insist on this and not be satisfied without it. Grimaldi at once remarked that the British ministry must be more unreasonable than he had believed.

Rochford considered for a moment, then decided it would be prudent to accept the duplicate as an answer ; as he explained to Halifax, "I think the essential points are already gained, [and] I am sure I could not have gained more at this time." As for the reparations, these could still be insisted upon separately, without prejudice to the present settlement.

As a result, on the following day, when Grimaldi sent Rochford a duplicate of the order to the Governor of Yucatan, Rochford in return submitted a revised version of his prepared Office on the reparations, so that the duplicate could not thereafter be claimed as a full satisfaction. With this, the immediate crisis was resolved. ²²

21. SP 94/168, f.90, copy and translation, Grimaldi to Ramirez de Esteñoz, 16 September 1764.

22. this and the preceding three pages are based on Rochford's detailed journal in SP 94/168, f.78, Rochford to Halifax, 14-17 September 1764.

Rochford's lengthy report of these negotiations, enclosing the duplicate of the orders sent to the Governor of Yucatan, reached London on 27 September, just a week after Halifax had directed the Admiralty to order the assembly of a fleet at Jamaica to reinstate the logwood-cutters by force. Halifax at once revoked this directive ; George III observed to Grenville that "Lord Halifax was almost out of his wits with joy, at the answer from Spain." ²³ This joy pervaded his next letters to Rochford, which conveyed fulsome praise for Rochford's "Zeal, Dispatch, and great Ability" in executing his orders so successfully. Both the King and Halifax agreed that Rochford was wise not to press the reparations issue ; "it does much honour to your Judgment that, by your very Prudent Choice of the Time & the Manner of formally renewing that Demand," Rochford had preserved the settlement as well as kept the question of reparations open. ²⁴

While Rochford's prudence and judgment were undoubtedly his own, it seems likely that his unusually belligerent tone towards Grimaldi had received encouragement from another source. In a private letter of 17 September, Rochford thanked Sandwich for his advice during August :

"Your friendly hints have been of great use to me and I have put every art in practice to gain more than I [could ?] have done. They have certainly here done much more than they intended and . . . will avoid a rupture at any rate." ²⁵

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23. Grenville Papers, edited by W.J. Smith (1852), II, 515-7, Grenville's Diary, for 3 October 1764. (earlier on 27 September for the arrival of the dispatches.)
24. SP 94/168, fos.111 and 118, Halifax to Rochford, 28 September and 5 October 1764.
25. Sandwich Papers, Rochford to Sandwich, 17 September 1764, Private, printed in Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence, edited by F. Spencer (Manchester, 1961), pp.221-2.

Charles III was also pleased that the logwood question had been resolved so promptly, and in an audience of 19 October, at which Rochford conveyed George III's assurances that Britain would stamp out any illicit trading by the cutters, he chatted very freely, adding personal compliments which Rochford modestly protested to Halifax "would be too much Vanity in me to mention." ²⁶

Grimaldi, however, grumbled that there seemed no inclination on Britain's part to define the limits of the cutting areas in Honduras ; "he said a great deal more in the same peevish Stile, that we were ever an enterprizing Nation, and had extensive views of Commerce that could not be borne." Rochford had to "let him cool a little" before he could again raise the subject of reparations, but Grimaldi said he had done all he could and wished Rochford would not speak of the matter again. Rochford guessed that this was partly because of "the Emptyness of their Coffers," but Grimaldi later admitted that he did not dare mention the matter to Charles III, since the King already felt he had conceded far more than Britain deserved. Halifax was content to leave the matter there. ²⁷

In fact, reparations were never paid, although Rochford had carefully laid the basis for any subsequent claim, and the logwood-cutters were restored to their former sites early in 1765. There they remained undisturbed for more than a decade, only to fall easy prey when Spain joined the American War of Independence against Britain in 1779. ²⁸

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26. SP 94/168, f.147, Rochford to Halifax, 27 October 1764 ; Rochford was introduced at his audience by "my Friend" the Duke of Losada.
27. SP 94/168, f. 162, Halifax to Rochford, 23 November 1764 ; *ibid.*, fos.147 and 258, Rochford to Halifax, 27 October and 17 December 1764.
28. For the reinstatement of the cutters, see V.L. Brown, "Anglo-Spanish Relations in America," Hispanic American Historical Review, V (1922), pp.366-8 ; Burnaby's report was printed in the Annual Register (1765), pp.99-100, and in the London Magazine, XXXIV (1765), pp.315-6.

Despite Britain's dark threats of 'proper Measures', the Honduras logwood issue was much too trivial by itself to warrant another war, nor indeed were the powers of the Family Compact willing to renew hostilities at this time. It is surely significant that Grimaldi's concessions in the Honduras affair came soon after the Spanish government had received news from Paris that Choiseul had decided to avoid any further quarrel in the Turks Island dispute of June 1764 between Britain and France. ²⁹

The dispute between Britain and Spain over payment of the so-called Manila Ransom, on the other hand, held out a much livelier danger of renewed conflict, since the British demands met with determined refusal at Madrid.

The British conquest of Manila was one of the last major operations of the Anglo-Spanish War of 1762, and was planned in conjunction with the British East India Company to provide the Company with an alternative entrepôt to Portuguese Canton. In fact, the appearance of the British squadron under Admiral Cornish and Sir William Draper at Manila late in September 1762 was the first indication the city had that a state of war existed between Britain and Spain. Under the leadership of the acting Governor, Archbishop Rojo, the city mounted a spirited resistance, but after heavy bombardment the attacking forces breached the defences on 6 October 1762, and the Governor immediately sued for terms of capitulation. ³⁰

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29. Lalaguna, p.143, citing Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, legajo 4565, Grimaldi to Fuentes, 13 August and 17 September 1764 ; legajo 4681, Fuentes to Grimaldi, 3 September 1764. In London, Sandwich remarked upon the similarities between the Turks Island and Honduras logwood disputes ; Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence (1961), pp.193-214, passim, especially p.199 of 15 August 1764.
30. Documents illustrating the British Conquest of Manila, 1762-1763, edited by N.P. Cushner (London, 1971), pp.11-120, is now the best printed account of the preparations and conquest ; shorter accounts appear in V.T. Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763-93 (London, 1952), I, pp.75-77, and in H.M. Stephens and H.E. Bolton, The Pacific Ocean in History (New York, 1917), pp.192-213.

The terms of capitulation were accompanied by a demand that the Governor and Council of Manila pay an indemnity of four million dollars to spare the city from plunder ; half to be paid at once and the remainder at a time to be decided. Archbishop Rojo immediately agreed to this condition, offering the contents of various public funds and the silver aboard the vessel Philipina, shortly expected from Acapulco. If these sources did not satisfy the full amount, the Governor promised to issue Bills of Exchange payable by the Treasury of the King of Spain. This was the notorious Manila Ransom. ³¹

British troops and their Sepoy auxiliaries had already commenced looting in some parts of the city, but Draper soon put a stop to this, even hanging on the spot soldiers who were caught in the act of disobeying his orders. The goods plundered were then gathered in a central place and their value (about 26,000 dollars) added to the total for the ransom. From public and private funds, a further 500,000 dollars was collected, but it was assumed that most people had hidden or buried their wealth. The silver-ship Philipina was never taken, and its treasure apparently found its way into the hands of local resistance forces in the interior led by Don Simon Anda. In February 1763 Archbishop Rojo therefore drew up a Bill for two million dollars on the Spanish Treasury and handed it to the British Commander. ³²

31. Cushner, Documents illustrating the British Conquest of Manila, pp.122-124.

32. Cushner, pp.125-139, 161, 168-174. Draper left Manila on 11 November 1762. News of the capture of Manila reached Europe too late to affect the peace settlement, and report of the Treaty of Paris was not to reach Manila until August 1763. The Philippines were thereupon handed back to Spain, and the British finally left the islands early in 1764: Cushner, pp.194-205 ; Harlow, I, 76-77. See also brief accounts of the Capitulation in Coxé, Memoirs of the Kings of Spain (1815), III, 307, and Renaut, "Etudes sur le Pacte de Famille," Revue des Colonies Francaises (1922), p.223. I have not yet seen H. de la Costa, "The Siege and Capture of Manila by the British, September-October 1762," Philippine Studies, X (1962), 607-653, cited in Cushner, p.2, note 5.

Almost exactly a year to the day from the fall of Manila, a copy of this Bill for two million dollars was forwarded to Rochford (then at Paris on his way to Madrid), with orders to obtain its full payment as soon as possible; "using your utmost endeavours." Rochford asked his Secretary of Embassy, Ligonier, who was travelling ahead to Madrid, to broach the subject with the Spanish ministers : Grimaldi therefore had an answer ready when Rochford arrived and made the demand early in December 1763. ³³

It was an absolute refusal. Grimaldi told Rochford at his house that Charles III had given positive orders not to countenance the draft of the Archbishop of Manila. As acting Governor, Rojo had no authority whatsoever to draw upon the Royal Treasury ; Grimaldi retorted that he "might as well have drawn upon the King of Spain to deliver up the Kingdom of Granada." Apart from observing that this seemed a gross lack of good faith on Spain's part not to fulfil terms already agreed upon, Rochford did not press the point any further : "their Treasury is so low, that Demands for Money affect Them in a very sensible manner." ³⁴

Nor did the British ministers see any urgency in pressing the Ransom issue at this time, for there were two further matters related to the capture of Manila still unresolved. These were, firstly, a claim by the East India Company for the maintenance of Spanish officers during the British occupation of Manila, and secondly, the fate of the prize-ship Santisima Trinidad, the so-called Manila Galleon. The latter question was so inextricably entangled with the Ransom issue that its consideration effectively suspended the British demand for well over a year. ³⁵

33. SP 94/165, f.111, Halifax to Rochford, 7 October 1763 ; *ibid.*, f.187, Ligonier to Halifax, 25 November 1763.

34. SP 94/165, f.203, Rochford to Halifax, 12 December 1763.

35. SP 94/166, f.50, Halifax to Rochford, 3 February 1764.

The galleon Santisima Trinidad, bound from Manila for Acapulco, was seized in open ocean on 30 October 1762 by one of the British warships searching for the Philipina. The Council of Manila immediately protested, since this was well after the signing of the capitulation, but the huge vessel and its cargo were held as lawful prize. A year later, in November 1763, an Admiralty Prize-Court upheld this view, and condemned ship and cargo as legitimate prizes of war.³⁶

Masserano, the Spanish ambassador in London, continued to protest that the Santisima Trinidad had been taken unlawfully, and on 6 March 1764 he claimed restitution on the grounds that the ship and its cargo were originally taken as part of the Ransom for Manila, but should now be returned since the looting by British troops at Manila rendered the terms of the Ransom null and void. Masserano was then reminded that the capitulation made no mention of this particular vessel, yet when the ship arrived at Plymouth a few months later, he renewed his demand. Halifax advised him that the only possible means of redress lay in an appeal against the Admiralty decision. Masserano delayed lodging this appeal until November 1764, and in his voluminous correspondence with the Secretary of State in London, anticipated several major themes of Rochford's later negotiation regarding the Ransom, notably the Spanish view that the British had broken the terms of the capitulation.³⁷

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36. Cushner, pp.156-158, 160-161, for the capture and initial protests ; SP 94/168, fos.169-172, a summary of the case of the Santisima Trinidad by the Advocate General, James Marriott, 23 October 1764.
37. SP 94/167, f.60, Halifax to Rochford, 15 June 1764 ; SP 94/168, fos. 169-172, Marriott's summary, 23 October 1764 ; SP 94/167, fos.238-242, and SP 94/168, fos.164-168, for copies of correspondence between Masserano and Halifax, July-November 1764, and SP 94/167, f.174, Halifax to Masserano, 2 July 1764 ; see also Lalaguna, pp.157-162, citing Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, legajos 6956 and 6958 for Masserano to Grimaldi, 27 January, 6 March, 17 April, 21 September, and 27 November 1764. "Arguments brought by the Spaniards for refusing payment of the ransom bills for preserving Manila," with copies of Draper's letters of October 1762, appear in the Annual Register (1764), pp.138-141.

Rochford received no further instructions regarding the Manila Ransom until after the Lords of Appeals finally reported on the case of the Santisima Trinidad on 14 August 1765 ; the Spanish appeal was rejected and the decision of the Admiralty Prize-Court was upheld.³⁸ By this time there had been a change of ministry in London, and Halifax had been replaced as Southern Secretary by Rochford's Eton school-friend, H.S. Conway.³⁹ Masserano had hoped that British ministerial instability would enable Spain to let the Manila Ransom quietly fade and be forgotten,⁴⁰ but Conway now revived that demand, with some spirit ; though his dispatches must have seemed to Rochford vastly more prolix than those of his predecessor, they were undeniably more vigorous as well.

In his fresh instructions of 20 August, Conway observed that the long silence in the correspondence may have led the Spanish to think that the matter had been laid aside, but Rochford was now to employ all his zeal and ability to press for the full payment of the Ransom. Reviewing and answering the possible objections, Conway acknowledged that there may be no law in Spain enabling a Governor or Archbishop to draw on the Royal Treasury for so large a sum, but treaties made and signed must be fulfilled, as they engage the honour of nations ; the Spanish ministers would surely dishonour their King "by advising him to act a Part rather becoming the low & mercenary Principles of a Banker or Scrivener, than the liberal and exalted Sentiments of a great Prince."⁴¹

38. SP 94/171, f.71, copy of the Decree of the Lords of Appeals, 14 August 1765. Lalaguna, p.162, appears to confuse the interim report of 23 October 1764 with the final decree.

39. On 12 July 1765 ; see J. Steven Watson, The Reign of George III (1960), pp.111-117, for Conway's role in the Rockingham ministry.

40. Lalaguna, p.165, citing Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, legajos 6958 and 6959, for Masserano to Grimaldi, 25 March, 15 and 28 June 1765.

41. SP 94/171, f.85, Conway to Rochford, 20 August 1765 ; see also f.64, Conway to Rochford, 16 August 1765, accompanying the Decree of the Lords of Appeals.

The Spanish ministers had already seen Masserano's reports on the new spirit of firmness and resolution which seemed to have gripped the British government, and even before Rochford received his fresh instructions to renew the demand for the Manila Ransom, the Secretary of State's office in London had intercepted and deciphered orders from Grimaldi to Masserano which expressed hopes for delay, giving Spain time to prepare for defensive measures in case another war broke out between Spain and Britain.⁴²

Grimaldi was therefore very much on the defensive when Rochford revived the Manila issue on 3 September 1765. Rochford began cautiously and moderately, "Knowing how tender and disagreeable a Subject" it would be ; but Grimaldi "flew out at the first mention of the word Ransom," and said they would go to all Eternity rather than pay so unjust a demand. He at once retracted this statement, and observed that he had no authority for such a remark. He lapsed into a bitter silence, and would have stopped there, had not Rochford continued on the injustice of Spain's refusal and the moderation of Draper's forces at Manila. At this, Grimaldi grew very heated, and vehemently reminded Rochford that although the British had left the buildings intact, they had stripped the interiors. After further acrimonious exchanges on similar themes, Grimaldi ended the interview with a request that Rochford should submit an Office making formal demand for payment, which Rochford agreed to do.⁴³

In a private letter accompanying his dispatch to Conway reporting this stormy encounter, Rochford ventured to express his own opinion regarding the Manila issue :

42. Lalaguna, p.168, citing BM Add MSS 32300, f.82, Grimaldi to Masserano, 31 August 1765.

43. SP 94/171, f.152, Rochford to Conway, 6 September 1765.

"I do not pretend to give Advice, but I think it my Duty to give it as my Opinion formed upon the best Intelligence I can get here, that if a Categorical Answer is insisted upon with Regard to the Ransom of Manila that They in some shape or other, may be brought to comply, unless jointly with the Courts of France and Vienna, They are at present determined to commence a War, which I seriously do not believe at this present Period is their Intention. . . . Upon the Whole, be assured that much will depend on the Language the Court of France holds ; if They yield, this Court must follow their Example." ⁴⁴

Clearly, Rochford himself favoured a very firm line, and he took care to make this obvious to both the French Ambassador, Ossun, and the French Consul-General, the Abbé Béliardi ; to Ossun he hinted darkly that Britain seemed to be giving France and Spain too much time to prepare themselves, ⁴⁵ while to Béliardi he lamented being constrained by his instructions to keep a friendly moderate tone far removed from his own feelings on the matter. He stressed to Béliardi that Britain would not give up the Ransom demand. ⁴⁶

Both these reports received some currency in Madrid, as well as reaching in time their chief target, Choiseul. After giving Grimaldi his formal demand for the Ransom, Rochford attended Court constantly, and noticed that Charles III seemed a trifle cool ; he "has not that easy Behaviour with me, He had . . ." This did not surprise Rochford in the least, "for I know that this Affair has been represented to him in the worst of Lights." Grimaldi avoided

44. SP 94/171, f.150, Rochford to Conway, 6 September 1765, Private.

45. Archives Etrangères, Correspondance Politique, Espagne 544, f.36, Ossun to Choiseul, 5 September 1765, quoted in Blart, Rapports de la France et de l'Espagne (1915), p.84. Blart erroneously identifies the British Ambassador as Bristol instead of Rochford.

46. AECP, Espagne 544, f.54, Béliardi to Choiseul, 9 September 1765, quoted in Blart, p.84. See also Renaut, "Etudes.," p.228, for this conversation between Rochford and Béliardi.

all mention of the Manila Ransom, until he was rather bluntly reminded of it one evening when the Rochfords came to dine at his house. Grimaldi did not come home "till the moment Dinner was set upon the Table," and immediately afterwards retreated to his Study. But Rochford was not to be put off so lightly. He excused himself from the assembled company and followed the Minister to his room, where he chided him for the delay since submitting his formal demand. Grimaldi muttered peevishly that the delay might last some while yet, then after a pause, he burst out with a richly theatrical protest : "Je me soumettrois d'être haché en pieces, plutot que d'accorder une Demande si injuste! " Rochford let this pass, though he was tempted to suggest that the Spanish answer waited on the return of the messenger from Paris ; "but I did not chuse to exasperate him, or let him know I was acquainted with this Circumstance." 47

Even so, Rochford privately wondered whether Choiseul meant to push Spain to extremities over the Manila Ransom, ready or not, for if France wanted another war with Britain, the Manila issue gave the best pretext by which Spanish coöperation could be secured.⁴⁸ But other considerations, not least the attitudes of the individual Spanish ministers, gradually led Rochford to adopt the more optimistic view that the Spanish would try to turn the affair "into a Paper Dispute, and gain as much Time as they possibly can." Grimaldi was of course the key figure in the Spanish ministry, and his personal sympathies were well-known to favour French policy. Grimaldi's personal attachment to Choiseul made him "strongly

47. SP 94/171, f.192, Rochford to Conway, 10 September 1765, Secret ; *ibid.*, f.209, Rochford to Conway, 17 September 1765. Rochford's own account contrasts interestingly with the version given by Renaut, "Etudes . .," p.228, which states that Rochford "s'enflamme et réclame impétueusement le paiement immédiat."

48. SP 94/171. f.192. Rochford to Conway. 10 September 1765. Secret.

prejudiced" against the British claim, and Rochford suspected that it was he who chiefly misrepresented the case to Charles III. Squilaci and Ariaga, on the other hand, were less likely to advise hostile measures. Squilaci was, in Rochford's opinion, "excessively timid ; frightened at the Expense that would attend even the preparations for a War," since he knew they could not afford it, and convinced that a war itself would certainly ruin him. Ariaga as Minister for the Marine and the Indies knew better than any other the state of the Spanish Navy, "and though a little Spanish Quixotism may prevail with him" as a true Old Spaniard and a very great bigot, Rochford doubted if he would advise violent measures ; even if only to differ from Grimaldi and Squilaci, "Both of whom he dislikes much." 49

While Rochford waited for an answer to his formal demand, however, the Spanish Ministry went to some pains to make a show of strength. Officers were called to Court for consultation, orders were issued for the repair of fortresses on the border with Portugal, and the King himself spoke at length to Rochford about the excellent condition of his cavalry. Rochford was not overawed ; "all this is to make a Parade. They would certainly be more reserved if they seriously meant anything." Knowing how deficient their finances were, Rochford was confident that Squilaci would throw cold water on any expensive plans for warlike preparations, and for his own part remained "convinced beyond a doubt, that there is Nothing They dread so much as War at this Juncture." 50

49. SP 94/171, f.209, Rochford to Conway, 17 September 1765.

50. SP 94/171, f.233, Rochford to Conway, 23 September 1765. Acknowledging this dispatch, Conway expressed some impatience for the Spanish answer, but assured Rochford that George III was "perfectly satisfied" with his reports and his handling of the situation thus far ; SP 94/171, f.225, Conway to Rochford, 4 October 1765.

Grimaldi finally produced Spain's first full Answer on the Manila Ransom at the very start of October 1765, although the paper itself was dated 29 September. It was a long and detailed Answer, which amounted to another outright refusal, based on two main arguments. In the first place, it was argued that the Archbishop, even as Governor of Manila, had no authority to draw on the Royal Treasury, and that the British were foolish to think that he could. Secondly, the Answer claimed that the capitulation was obtained under duress, by the threat of a sack, and that the British broke the terms of the agreement by allowing looting to continue after it was signed. These basic contentions were supported by ample and at times even amusing illustration. For example, it was protested that even merchants do not make agreements of this kind ; if one in Madrid were to draw on another in London without possessing any security, the bill would be protested. If everyone acted this way, the Answer continued scornfully, nations would soon bankrupt one another, merely by putting a knife at a Governor's throat! ⁵¹

Rochford simply acknowledged receipt of the Answer and forwarded it immediately to London, where it was not surprisingly regarded as being most unsatisfactory. It was expected in Under-Secretarial circles that Rochford would be ordered to persist in the demand, but Conway took a long while to draft a suitable Reply. Early in November he asked Rochford to explain that the delay did not imply acceptance. ⁵²

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51. SP 94/172, fos.17-23, Grimaldi to Rochford, 29 September 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.15, Rochford to Conway, 3 October 1765, is the covering letter. Grimaldi had earlier apologised for the delay, explaining that he had had to alter one or two expressions "which, though not intended, might give offence." SP 94/171, f.217, Grimaldi to Rochford, 15 September 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.236, Rochford to Conway, 30 September 1765
52. SP 94/172, f.71, Conway to Rochford, 8 November 1765 ; see also Historical Manuscripts Commission, 10th Report, Appendix I, p.396, Sedgwick to Weston, 12 October 1765 (the editor gives Rockingham for "Lord R." but this makes no sense ; it is obviously Rochford in this context).

The delay extended in fact throughout October and November, while Spanish military preparations continued and the risk of war seemed to loom ever nearer ; "Notwithstanding all their Professions [?of Peace] they are preparing, as well as They can, for the worst that may happen." Rochford therefore made a few very discreet enquiries regarding the possibility of a Composition in place of full payment of the Ransom, and reported "I have some reason to think They would not be averse to it, for though their Pride is very great, their Poverty is greater." 53

Rochford himself was sure, however, that even if a Composition were offered, Britain would need to insist very sternly before she could carry her point. He personally endeavoured to keep a firm tone at Madrid. His annoyance and frustration must have been intense therefore when he heard that Masserano had reported from London that the Manila affair was not seen there nearly so seriously as Rochford represented it at Madrid. Rochford begged Conway to redress this impression at once, and for the future to keep Masserano as ignorant as possible of matters being treated at Madrid ; "the higher he is talked to the better Effect it will have." Shortly afterwards, Rochford had confirmation of the need for a firm tone from a surprising source ; an intimate friend of Grimaldi's First Secretary, de Llano, privately warned Rochford, "unless you make use of Menaces you will not carry your Point, not even for a Composition." Rochford determined to maintain his stern tone ; "there is little Risk & much to gain from being firm." 54

53. SP 94/172, f.83, Rochford to Conway, 24 October 1765, Secret.

54. SP 94/172, f.108, Rochford to Conway, 4 November 1765, Private and Secret, and f.83 of 24 October ; Renaut, "Etudes . .," p.228, quotes from one of Masserano's reports late in September (but gives no references, alas) which stated that the British ministers regarded the Manila issue "avec sérénité et détachement," and would not risk a war over it.

Conway's detailed instructions to Rochford for the British Reply on Manila were finally copied out on 26 November, but they did not reach Rochford in Madrid until mid-December, and another week was taken up transforming Conway's instructions into a formal paper. In its final form, this Reply contained no fewer than twenty-one propositions, most of which concerned specific points or claims in the first Spanish Answer of 29 September.

The British claim rested primarily on the validity of the Capitulation, which it was held was "a formal & regular Treaty of Ransom." It was undoubtedly a public treaty, and there was no question of the Archbishop's authority as Governor being sufficient to conclude such a treaty. Since Spain had never repudiated this Capitulation, the ransom was bound to be paid ; how or by whom or from which fund was Spain's problem, but could not affect Britain's claim. There could be no comparison with the transactions of merchants (indeed Conway thought this section scarcely deserved serious answer), since this was a treaty between nations, properly concluded, for which hostages and securities were taken. The question of looting by the British troops after the signing of the agreement was hotly contested, stress being laid upon Draper's prompt action to stop the looting then in progress, and the fact that the goods taken were gathered and counted as part of the Ransom. Altogether, this Reply made an exceptionally strong case. 55

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55. The Reply itself (in French) is in SP 94/173, f.43, dated 25 December 1765, with later marginal annotation in Spanish ; the instructions from which it was closely derived are in SP 94/172, f.111, Conway to Rochford, 26 November 1765. Cushner, pp.170-171 (note), points out that in legal terms Britain had a very strong case indeed to claim payment ; he cites N.W. Sibley, "The Story of the Manila Ransom, 1768, [sic] and Britain's Debt to the United States," Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law, VII (1925), 17-32, who concluded that liability for the two million dollars had in law passed to the United States, and that Britain still had a strong case then ; but Philippine independence now makes the matter doubtful.

After handing Grimaldi this Reply on 25 December 1765, Rochford took care not to miss a single day at Court for the following week, and thereby learned that there were two Royal Councils held to consider the British Reply, with a third expected. Rochford gathered from his friends and informants at Court that Charles III and his ministers saw no danger in persisting with an outright refusal. In addition to warning those with whom he spoke of the grave risk that another refusal might outrage opinion in Britain, especially in Parliament, thus forcing the ministry there into stronger measures, Rochford also submitted to Grimaldi in the first few days of the New Year an unsigned undated Office, which put the British argument very succinctly and ended with what Rochford described as "a Sort of a Menace," as strong as it could be, yet "Nothing that could exasperate." ⁵⁶

This confidential piece of encouragement represents the farthest extent of Rochford's personal "tough line" at Madrid early in January 1766, and while he continued to "have it come to their Ears how fatal it might be if they meant either to chicanery with Us, or absolutely refuse a Compliance," he remained confident that he had not offended. ⁵⁷ He heard that a copy of their projected answer had been sent to Masserano in London, to see how it would be relished there ; whether true or not, this showed how vital it was for Conway to hold the same firm tone as Rochford held at Madrid. ⁵⁸

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56. SP 94/172, fcs. 193 and 195, Rochford to Conway, 23 and 30 December 1765 ; SP 94/173, f. 21, Rochford to Conway, 6 January 1766 ; SP 94/173, f. 71, the paper marked "A" is Rochford's undated informal Note.
57. SP 94/173, f. 38, Rochford to Conway, 22 January 1766, contains a general account of developments in January ; SP 94/173, f. 27, Conway to Rochford, 31 January 1766, gave full approval of the paper marked "A", but earlier, Masserano had complained in private that his Court was "much offended" with the language held to her by Britain on the Manila Ransom ; Historical Manuscripts Commission, 10th Report, Appendix I, p. 398, Sedgwick to Weston, 14 December 1765 (which also remarks, "that affair, I hear, has been push'd till it has grown rather serious").
58. SP 94/173, f. 30, Rochford to Conway, 16 January 1766, Private.

For the early part of January, Rochford remained confident that Spain would at least avoid an open breach with Britain at this time ; "unless They are greater Quixots than I believe They are." But by the middle of the month he was less certain. Grimaldi was heard to say that Spain would either pay the whole, if the claim proved just, or nothing at all, for it was not consistent with the King's dignity to make a Composition in an affair of this nature. Since Grimaldi continued to "keep the profoundest Silence upon this Subject," Rochford was at a loss to guess what their answer would be. 59

Fortunately he was not kept in suspense much longer. Only a week later, on 19 January 1766, Grimaldi completed the second Spanish Answer on the Manila Ransom, and handed it to Rochford the following morning. It was not, as Rochford had feared, yet another outright refusal. Grimaldi gave an assurance that if the debt was just and legal, Charles III was as determined to pay or see it paid as Britain was to recover it. But the main argument of this Answer was that as yet the Spanish government remained largely uninformed of the exact nature of events at Manila, and therefore could not decide to their own satisfaction how well founded the British claim was, or whether in fact the Royal Treasury ought to pay the remainder of the Ransom. Grimaldi suggested that the citizens of Manila should pay, and ought to have capitulated only for what they were possessed of. 60

59. SP 94/173, f.30, Rochford to Conway, 16 January 1766, Private ; *ibid.*, f.25, Rochford to Conway, 13 January 1766.

60. SP 94/173, f.67, Grimaldi to Rochford, The Pardo, 19 January 1766 (translation) ; *ibid.*, f.34, Rochford to Conway, 20 January 1766 ; see also, SP 94/173, f.38, Rochford to Conway, 22 January 1766. Grimaldi's plea that his Court remained largely uninformed on the circumstances of the capture has some basis ; Archbishop Rojo died on 30 January 1764, and his lieutenants were heavily preoccupied with Anda's revolt in the interior. Rojo's reports had apparently been filled with pressing current problems rather than post-mortems on the capture. See Cushner, pp.200-201, and 187-199 *passim*.

Grimaldi read the Answer aloud before handing it to Rochford, but not without interruption : "We had several Altercations during the Reading and Contestations upon it, for it is apparently intended to gain Time, and to drive the Business into a Paper War." Rochford's personal opinion, expressed in his report to Conway, was that "They never mean to pay a Shilling of the Debt, unless compelled to it." If Grimaldi sincerely intended to start an impartial investigation of the Ransom claim, then Britain might properly coöperate and await the outcome, but Rochford privately thought otherwise ; ". . in their present Situation, if threatened with Reprisals, or a Categorical Answer be insisted on, I believe They will submit." 61

Conway was also alert to the snares of a paper war, in which, as he put it, "Memoires & Promemoires may multiply without End, 'till the real State of the Affair is lost in the Confusion of repeated False Representations." While cautioning Rochford against "any premature Aigreur," Conway agreed that it was now vitally necessary for Spain to be convinced that Britain would insist upon a satisfaction over the Manila Ransom. So long as some sort of satisfaction was made, Rochford might accept whatever solution suited the delicacy of the Spanish Court. Rochford's earlier warnings about holding the same firm tone at London had taken effect, for Conway wrote ; "I therefore leave it to Your Excellency's usual Management & Dexterity to effect at Madrid what I shall endeavour with Prince Masserano, to let him see that it is a Point that we are not disposed to recede from." 62

61. SP 94/173, f.38, Rochford to Conway, 22 January 1766.

62. SP 94/173, f.91, Conway to Rochford, 11 February 1766.

Rochford put these instructions into action at the Pardo on 5 March in "a long serious Conference" with Grimaldi, which he began by stressing, quietly and persuasively, the dangers likely to follow any misunderstanding between Britain and Spain, and his Court's desire only to see justice done without any renewal of hostilities. Grimaldi readily reciprocated these sentiments, and volunteered his own confirmation of what had been Rochford's conviction all along, namely, that Spain was so unprepared for war she would "bear more than He hoped or believed We would put them to the Tryal of," rather than cause a rupture of relations. And yet, Rochford emphasised, his orders were to insist on a satisfaction, and not to enter into any further written discussion on the Ransom. Grimaldi suggested that if Rochford merely put this in writing, with his statement that if there was another absolute refusal by Spain, Britain would probably insist on a categorical answer, then he might be able to secure a suitable satisfaction. Rochford accepted this, and they parted amicably, without the least aigreur.⁶³

A few days later, while assisting at a Royal Dinner at the Pardo, Rochford was surprised to notice how gracious the King was to him, after his coolness of the previous two months, and with this encouraging sign, immediately went to see Grimaldi again. Grimaldi produced the Note Rochford had given him on 5 March, and said that there had been two Council meetings to consider it, both with the King, who had remarked that the word "insist" was in this context a palabra preñada, suggesting more of a menace than was meant to be revealed. Rochford tried to join issue at this, "for I was determined to push him as far as I could with Decency in order

63. SP 94/173, f.164, Rochford to Conway, 12 March 1766.

to discover his real Intentions," but clearly this was what Grimaldi hoped to do with Rochford, for he swiftly changed the subject to the rumours of the previous year that Spain intended an invasion of Portugal, and taxed Rochford with spreading alarm ; "with such Suspicious and Informations as Your Court have, I do not wonder you are instructed to speak in so peremptory a Manner." But he then begged Rochford to believe him, as a Gentleman if he would not believe him as a Minister, that Spain had no designs on Portugal, and any reports to this effect were absolutely false. Rochford was impressed by Grimaldi's solemn and serious tone, and later reflected that he was probably sincere ; "though I am not apt to be too credulous, I would not willingly give a false Alarm." Having thus diverted Rochford from the offensive, Grimaldi made his main request, which was that Rochford should make another formal Demand in writing.

Rochford guessed that this was a test, to see whether he was really instructed to use the threat that Britain would "probably insist" on a satisfaction, or whether he was simply bluffing to gain his point. Rochford was glad to be able to agree to this request, but warned again that he would not enter into any further debate on the Manila affair, and the interview ended amicably once more, with Rochford staying at the Pardo to dine with Grimaldi. ⁶⁴

From Grimaldi's tone and his assurances, Rochford felt confident that the third Spanish Answer would be a mild one, and probably suggest some form of mezzo termine. This forecast proved to be perfectly accurate. With a promptness that was remarkable for the Spanish Court, Grimaldi gave Rochford their third Answer only

64. SP 94/173, f.164, Rochford to Conway, 12 March 1766. A copy of Rochford's brief formal Demand (in French) is found in SP 94/173, f. 171, Rochford to Grimaldi, 8 March 1766.

three days later, on 11 March. Though it was almost as long and detailed as the earlier answers, its tone was distinctly more cautious, and it contained an important proposal ; though convinced of their rightness, the Spanish Court was willing to submit the Ransom issue to an impartial arbitrator, and would abide by his decision. ⁶⁵

The offer of arbitration, though palpably another delaying tactic, was something of a personal triumph for Rochford. Though it could not please the British ministers, it was a significant concession for the Spanish, and was infinitely better than another absolute refusal. Undoubtedly the concession was motivated by fear of war and an awareness of Spain's unpreparedness despite the hasty efforts of the past year. But no concession would have been made had there been any doubt of Britain's seriousness and determination to press for payment of the Manila Ransom. It was largely thanks to Rochford's personally firm tone at Madrid that any such doubts were unable to have effect.

The idea of submitting the dispute to arbitration was in fact Choiseul's, yet the available evidence shows that before he suggested this shrewd escape for the Spanish Court, his own thoughts coincided remarkably closely with Rochford's, namely, that Spain would be better advised to pay the Ransom, even unjustly, rather than risk another war with Britain before she was properly prepared. ⁶⁶

65. SP 94/173, f.173 [sic] , Grimaldi to Rochford, 11 March 1766 (in Spanish) ; translation, f.180.

66. Renaut, "Etudes", p.229, quotes from Choiseul to Guerchy, February 1766, "Il vaut mieux payer quelques millions même injustement que d'entretenir un pretexte de guerre bien plus onéreux pour la puissance qui est obligée tôt ou tard de vider la querelle par les armes." Writing to Grimaldi, Choiseul defended the time-buying device of arbitration in view of the fact that neither France nor Spain would be ready for war for another three years at least (AECF Espagne 545, f.213, Choiseul to Grimaldi, 21 March 1766), but to Ossun he was even more revealing ; "Quant à la guerre, je doute que nous l'ayons cette année ; l'Espagne payera (ceci entre nous) la rançon de Manille et nous gagnerons du temps." AE Mémoires et Documents, 574, f.184, Choiseul to Ossun, 22 March 1766 ; both quoted in Blart, pp.85-86.

Rochford was therefore justified in thinking that if Britain insisted strongly enough and backed up her claim with threats, then the risk of war would prove less than the likelihood of Spain's agreeing to some form of satisfaction. Clearly Choiseul would advise this course rather than a premature and disastrous war.

It is indeed tempting to speculate on Rochford's chances of success in such a task, so well-suited to his personal inclination, but the British government was not willing to take the risk, and Rochford's own contribution to the Manila affair as British Ambassador at Madrid had in fact already drawn to its close. Conway lay gravely ill throughout April, and Rochford guessed this to be the reason for his not having received any further instructions on the Manila Ransom before he finally left Madrid about 15 May 1766 for his new post in Paris. ⁶⁷

With the Rockingham ministry beginning to disintegrate, Conway was in no mood for brinksmanship, and instead he hoped for a swift settlement by offering what Rochford had mentioned eight months before ; a cash composition. Conway's instructions of 16 May to this effect were received at Madrid by Rochford's Secretary, de Visme, who made the offer to Grimaldi on 2 June. Grimaldi not surprisingly declined a cash settlement, and renewed the Spanish offer of arbitration on the Ransom claim. Conway had by this time transferred to the Northern Secretaryship, but his successor Richmond followed Conway's original plan by instructing de Visme to lower the price considerably to a mere £ 300,000. This new offer was made on 7 July, with similar lack of success. ⁶⁸

67. SP 94/173, f.193, Rochford to Conway, 24 March 1766, Separate ; SP 94/174, f.18, Rochford to Conway, 5 May 1766 ; *ibid.*, f.22, de Visme to Conway, 12 May 1766.

68. SP 94/174, f.5, Conway to Rochford, 16 May 1766 (received by de Visme); *ibid.*, fos.41 and 52, de Visme to Conway, 2 and 9 June 1766 ; *ibid.*, f.48, Richmond to de Visme, 20 June 1766 ; *ibid.*, f.173, de Visme to Richmond, 7 July 1766.

With Spain's insistence on arbitration so unlikely to be accepted by Britain, especially after proposals to ask the King of Prussia to be the arbitrator, and with Britain's insistence on a cash composition, so distasteful to Charles III, the Manila Ransom dispute had arrived at the impasse in which it was to remain. Conway's offer of a composition was a greater concession than Spain's offer of arbitration, and virtually lost the game for Britain by demonstrating her unwillingness to risk a confrontation. Grimaldi having thus gained ground resolved, as Rochford feared he might, to pay not a shilling unless by force. Before the end of 1766, a new British Southern Secretary, Shelburne, revived the demand for the Manila Ransom, but met with a stony refusal, partly in consequence of the emergence of a more serious dispute over the Falkland Islands, and the new British Ambassador to Madrid, Gray, a year later confessed total failure in his efforts to revive the issue. After 1767, the Manila Ransom was simply allowed to drop into oblivion. Rochford had gained more ground for Britain in this dispute than he has been given credit for, and the loss of his carefully gained position after his departure from Madrid was no less spectacular than it was sudden. ⁶⁹

69. SP 94/174, f.188, de Visme to Richmond, 28 July 1766 ; Renaut, "Etudes," pp.231-238, is a useful summary of the last phase of the Manila affair, but compare also Lalaguna, pp.178-191, and Ramsey, Anglo-French Relations (1939), pp.167-169, for the Falklands dispute and its linking with the Manila issue. The standard work here is of course J. Goebel, The Struggle for the Falkland Islands (Yale, 1927) ; see pp.224-225 on Manila. Renaut, p.231, claims that Spain's chances for arbitration were improved by the departure from Madrid of "l'impétueux Rochford, si prévenu contre les ministres de Charles III et si compromis par son attitude intransigeante." Though inaccurate and misleading, this remark suggests the relief which Grimaldi must have felt at Rochford's departure.

CHAPTER 11 : "Frequent Applications . . for His Majesty's
Trading Subjects."

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"Frequent Applications . . .
for His Majesty's Trading Subjects."

While it is difficult if not at times somewhat pointless to reconstruct the daily activities of an ambassador at his post, it is clear that much of Rochford's time at Madrid, as at Turin, was taken up with matters commercial or consular rather than merely diplomatic. Commerce and diplomacy were inseparable elements of Anglo-Spanish relations throughout the eighteenth century.¹ Some of the more important items of this additional and time-consuming ambassadorial business were recommended to Rochford's care by the Secretary of State in London, but for the most part little would appear in the official correspondence, except perhaps as enclosed copies of Memorials and Offices relating to issues readily settled on the spot. As Rochford wrote to Halifax at the close of 1764 ;

"There are many little Affairs that occur frequently relative to our Commerce the details of which I do not trouble Your Lordship with, but I flatter myself you will believe I am attentive to them."²

Such attention was of course enjoined upon Rochford by his general Instructions, which besides reminding him to keep in constant touch with the British Consuls in Spain, advised him to seek redress for abuses or breaches of the commercial treaties on his own initiative,

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1. This chapter makes no pretence of being a general account of Anglo-Spanish commercial relations after 1763, though an up-to-date study is badly needed. For the earlier part of the century, the standard work in English remains J.O. McLachlan's Trade and Peace with Old Spain, 1667-1750 (Cambridge, 1940), which has full references ; but see also V.L. Brown, Studies in the History of Spain (Northampton, Mass., 1929), especially Part II, "Anglo-French Rivalry for the Trade of the Spanish Peninsula, 1763-83".
 2. SP 94/168, f.266, Rochford to Halifax, 31 December 1764.

without referring every trivial complaint to London for specific orders.³

It may understandably be wondered why Rochford as ambassador should be preoccupied with petty commercial matters when Britain maintained her own Consul-General at Madrid on a salary of £ 1,000 a year.⁴ But the reality of Porten's situation was that he had never been formally recognised as Consul-General at Madrid. While admitting the convenience and necessity of Consuls-General, the Spanish Court was prevented by its intricate rules of etiquette from acknowledging the presence of any foreign consuls at Madrid. Rochford's predecessor Bristol had refused to present Porten at Court except as the British Consul-General, with the result that Porten had not been presented at all. This meant that Porten could not deal directly with the Spanish ministers, nor submit Memorials under his own name as Consul-General. Rochford had to perform this function for him.⁵

Fortunately this clumsy and inconvenient arrangement worked without any serious difficulty, thanks to the firm friendship which soon grew between Rochford and Porten. Indeed, Porten later wrote that his dependence on the ambassador in this respect had proved a "peculiar happiness" of his bachelor existence at Madrid.⁶

3. see above, p.205 for Rochford's "General Orders," FO 90/62, f.58, and SP 94/165, f.50, dated 20 September 1763.

4. Journal of the House of Commons, XXXII (Civil List Payments), pp. 522, 530, 537, 548, 555, 564, 572. He was appointed to Madrid in April 1760, returning to England at the outbreak of war in 1762; D.N.B., XVI, 167. He arrived back at Madrid in November 1763; SP 94/165, f.159, Porten to Halifax, 10 November 1763.

5. SP 94/172, f.175, Rochford to Conway, 9 December 1765. Similarly, the French Consul-General, Béliardi, had not been presented at Court as Consul, and dealt officially through Ossun, the French ambassador. But Ossun had presented Béliardi at Court as a private gentleman, which enabled him to deal with the Spanish ministers. See P. Muret, "Les papiers de l'Abbé Béliardi et les relations commerciales de la France et de l'Espagne au milieu du XVIIIe siècle," Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine, IV (1902-03), 657-672.

6. SP 94/172, f.180, Porten to Conway, 9 December 1765.

Rochford in turn paid tribute to Porten's "Diligence and Exactness." ⁷ But so long as this ad hoc arrangement continued to function adequately, the British government saw no need to press for formal recognition, and it was not until February 1766 that Rochford was granted permission to present Porten at Court merely as a private gentleman. ⁸ Though far from a final solution, this was at least a step in the right direction.

Rochford's earliest task on Porten's behalf was to secure the Royal cedula from the Spanish Court renewing approval of the commissions held by each of the British Consuls in Spain, after the interruption of the war. ⁹ Normally, however, Porten maintained his own correspondence with the Consuls, gathering information regarding shipping movements and abuses of the customs regulations, which he then passed on to Rochford for immediate redress or for report to London ;

"I never fail to make known to the Earl of Rochford every intelligence I can procure, & particularly all the notices I receive from the Sea Ports." ¹⁰

In addition, Porten made his own reports direct to the Secretary of State (or his Under-Secretary) on routine matters, such as forwarding the shipping lists received from individual Consuls, or tables of trade statistics compiled from their reports. ¹¹

7. SP 94/172, f.175, Rochford to Conway, 9 December 1765.
8. Following the example set by Béliardi. Rochford suggested this move not so much from existing difficulties, though he mentions that some inconvenience had been experienced in the past, as from the likelihood of future problems. SP 94/173, f.27, Conway to Rochford, 31 January 1766.
9. SP 94/165, f.211, Rochford to Halifax, 22 December 1763.
10. SP 94/166, f.62, Porten to Weston (Halifax's Under-Secretary), 26 January 1764.
11. For example, see SP 94/169, f.138, Porten to Halifax, 11 February 1765, and SP 94/173, f.101, Porten to Conway, 27 January 1766.

Another of Rochford's earliest tasks at Madrid on behalf of the Consul-General was the presentation of Petitions from British merchant bankers or their agents for the special licence or cedula necessary to export silver bullion from Spain. Officially such export of bullion was prohibited to foreigners, but in practice it had proven convenient, and remained necessary so long as British exports to Spain far exceeded the purchase of Spanish wines and fruits in return ; most merchants preferred to take the balance in silver. The licences were rarely granted in full, and then only grudgingly, with the result that bullion smuggling was rife at most Spanish ports, providing a major source of disputes involving British ships and sailors. ¹²

The first of these petitions which Rochford presented at Madrid, in the name of one Salvador, had been carried by Rochford on his journey to Spain in 1763. It is noteworthy, however, that subsequent report of the progress of this Petition was made by Porten himself, direct to the Secretary of State in London. ¹³

Little could be done effectively to control the bullion-smuggling, which many British merchants took to be their hallowed right, but Rochford uncovered a grave weakness even in the practice of leaving the legal export of silver in the hands of private licensees. He had been told in Paris that there were special advantages and therefore greater profits to be had from exporting Spanish silver to France rather than to England, so that few of the licences granted to British subjects actually brought silver into England. Porten had confirmed this remarkable fact upon

12. For a detailed discussion, see McLachlan, Trade and Peace with Old Spain, especially pp.14-18.

13 SP 94/165, f.66, Halifax to Rochford, 20 September 1763 (enclosures fos.42 and 44) ; *ibid.*, f.185, Porten to Halifax, 17 November 1763.

Rochford's arrival at Madrid ; the private licensees sent their silver wherever the best profits lay, usually to France or to Holland rather than to England. Rochford therefore suggested that the Bank of England or the Treasury obtain licences for the regular export of up to a million Spanish dollars' worth of gold and silver bullion each year to ensure a steady supply for coinage. Halifax forwarded this suggestion to the Treasury, and in March 1764 he was able to instruct Rochford to apply for licences to export 10,000 pistoles in gold and 100,000 dollars in silver "for His Majesty's Service" in England. ¹⁴

The question of bullion exports in one form or another continued to give Rochford "some employment" in his first years at Madrid. For example, early in 1764 he had to argue the case of a group of London merchants who had obtained a licence to ship bullion from Havana, and were being charged a nine per cent duty by the Governor of that place. The bullion was the proceeds of the sale of the merchants' goods after Havana had been returned to Spanish rule after the Peace in 1763. The Spanish government imposed no duty on proceeds from trading under the British occupation, but understandably did so on those obtained after the restitution. However, Rochford found the Spanish ministers anxious to avoid any dispute, and eager not only to conform to the letter of the law "but to go even a little further," and after a lengthy exchange of Offices the matter was resolved fairly and amicably. ¹⁵

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14. Nassau Papers, E/22, Draft (in Porten's hand) of Rochford's "Scheme for Silver Exports from Spain"; a further copy, SP 94/253, f.58 ; final version of 13 January 1764, and copy to the Treasury of 30 January, SP 94/166, fos.34, 35 ; SP 94/166, f.115, Halifax to Rochford, 13 March 1764.
 15. SP 94/166, fos.115, 226, Halifax to Rochford, 13 March and 15 May 1764 ; *ibid.*, f.204, Rochford to Halifax, 9 April 1764 ; SP 94/167, f.164, Rochford to Halifax, 3 June 1764.

A rather different case involving a similar principle arose early in 1765, with the wreck of a bullion-carrying English vessel, The True Briton, on the Galician coast near Cape Finisterre. Rochford acted promptly upon the news of this misfortune, and obtained an order that the bullion salvaged from the wreck should pay no new duty upon landing. After the gold and silver had been brought safely to Corunna, Rochford successfully applied for a second order that there should be no new duty for re-exportation.¹⁶

The problem of bullion smuggling at the major Spanish ports gave rise to a constant irritant in the visitation of British vessels by Spanish customs officers ; exemption from this visitation was one of Britain's treasured privileges under the old commercial treaties. As a result, Rochford found it necessary to make protests "from time to time" at Madrid, as a reminder to the Spanish ministers that this was a practice directly contrary to the treaties.¹⁷

But the more important cases relating to British traders upon which Rochford made repeated representations at Madrid were those recommended to his attention by the Secretary of State in London. Some of these were of such long standing that they seemed to be inherited along with the embassy by successive British ambassadors to Spain. Foremost among these was the claim by a group of British merchants established at Malaga, Messers Thrupp, Kirkpatrick, and others, whose effects and goods had been seized at the outbreak of the War of Jenkins' Ear in 1739, despite their precaution in having first ceded these effects to a local resident for safe-keeping. Kirkpatrick had returned to Malaga after the

16. SP 94/169, f.201, Rochford to Halifax, 25 February 1765 ; the Office notifying Rochford of the orders sent to the Intendant of Galicia is in Nassau Papers, E/9, (original, in Spanish) Squilaci to Rochford, 23 February 1765.

17. SP 94/171, f.54, Rochford to Halifax, 22 July 1765 ; see also McLachlan, Trade and Peace with Old Spain, pp.14-18.

Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle and finally died there in 1758. But he had failed to apply before his death for a dissequester of the credits which the Spanish government had at last acknowledged as the equivalent of that which had been seized, and his partners despaired of recovering their losses.¹⁸ Likewise the claim of one O'Donnell, which Keene had pressed in his time as ambassador, seemed hopeless both from neglect of the forms and the lapse of time.¹⁹

But the case which gave Rochford most trouble was that of one Beeston Long, a London merchant with interests in no fewer than ten vessels and their cargoes which had been seized as prizes at Havana after the conclusion of peace in 1748. After repeated appeals in 1752 and 1754, his claim had been recognised and the orders actually given for the debt to be resolved into a special fund at Havana from which Beeston Long would be reimbursed. But something had gone wrong. The fund was mysteriously emptied, not into Beeston Long's hands, and the Spanish authorities in their embarrassment maintained a stony silence on the matter, despite fresh appeals in 1759. Rochford was charged with the renewal of these appeals at the start of his embassy, but having submitted the necessary Office, nothing was heard of the matter for over a year. When reminded by Halifax, Rochford pointed out that such matters passed through Ariaga's office, which was notorious for its delays, but upon renewing his appeal, Rochford had a reply

18. There is a useful summary of this case in an undated paper (in Porten's hand) in Nassau Papers, E/23.

19. SP 94/172, f.48, Rochford to Conway, 7 October 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.71, Conway to Rochford, 8 November 1765.

within two months. However, it was in Rochford's opinion "so very extraordinary" a reply (thanking him for the reminder, as no trace could be found of his previous Office!) that he resolved to pursue the matter further in a very stern and vigorous Answer, which reviewed the complexities of the case in some detail. Yet even this was to languish several months more in Ariaga's department, unanswered, until Rochford remonstrated with Grimaldi in October over these unexplained delays. Despite "a good deal of Altercation," Rochford found he could not convince the minister of the justice of Beeston Long's claim, and was rendered almost speechless when Grimaldi claimed that the lapse of time had made the matter obsolete. Conway, the new Secretary of State in London, agreed that the Spanish attitude was "unfair and unreasonable," and instructed Rochford to persevere in the matter. But it was obvious from the further evasions and delays that the Spanish government had no intention of paying out a sum which they claimed had been seized in the British occupation of Havana in 1762.²⁰

The Beeston Long affair was typical of the worst frustrations Rochford met with at Madrid, but not all of the cases recommended to his advocacy were attended with failure. He had a notable success in obtaining the release of Captain Glas from his detention at Teneriffe, and it was a cruel twist of fate that cut his freedom short in tragedy. Glas and his ship the Hillsborough,

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20. SP 94/165, f.66, Halifax to Rochford, 20 September 1763 ; SP 94/253, f. 55, Porten to Beeston Long, 13 January 1764 ; SP 94/169, f.57, Halifax to Rochford, 29 January 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.191, Rochford to Halifax, 18 February 1765 ; SP 94/170, f.140, Halifax to Rochford, 7 June 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.84, Rochford to Halifax, 5 April 1765 ; SP 94/171, f.2, Rochford to Halifax, 1 July 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.127, Conway to Rochford, 13 September 1765 ; SP 94/172, f.50, Rochford to Conway, 14 October 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.58, Rochford to Conway, 21 October 1765 ; SP 94/172, f.126, Conway to Rochford, 27 November 1765.

carrying a valuable cargo for Messers Anthony Bacon and Company of London, called at the Canary Islands late in 1764, where to his amazement he was arrested and thrown into prison on suspicion of smuggling, and denied all communication with the outside world. His crew were apparently glad to escape from his dictatorial rule, and took ship for other parts, so that it was finally thanks to the British Consul at Teneriffe that Glas's plight was made known in London. Rochford was then instructed to demand orders for his release, protesting at the same time at the habitual mistreatment of British sailors at the Canaries. At London, Halifax also protested to Masserano, the Spanish ambassador. But Crimaldi had answered Rochford with the claim that the Governor of the Canaries/ proof of the charges against Glas. Rochford also heard from other sources that Glas had in fact been notorious as a smuggler, though his present voyage had been sponsored by the British government to reconnoitre watering places on the Cape Horn route. He therefore decided not to press the matter until more was heard from Teneriffe. But the Governor, after further long delays, finally admitted he had no evidence against Glas, and feebly claimed that he had been placed in quarantine, having earlier called at Morocco where plague had been reported. At this, Conway indignantly instructed Rochford to demand, with his "usual Clearness and Firmness," the immediate release of Captain Glas ; "this is not merely a private Affair, it is a National Concern." 21

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21. SP 94/169, f.126, Halifax to Rochford, 19 February 1765 ; SP 94/170, f.5, Halifax to Rochford, 22 March 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.114, Halifax to de Visme, 10 May 1765 ; SP 94/171, f.30, Conway to Rochford, 2 August 1765. The Spanish case against Glas, such as it was, is outlined in Nassau Papers, E/10, (copy, in Spanish) Squilaci to Grimaldi, 15 May 1765.

Rochford accordingly made this demand towards the end of August 1765, and when challenged to substantiate the charges against Glas, Grimaldi capitulated and agreed to his release, grumbling that Britain should adopt "so determined a Tone on the Liberty of this Delinquent." Within a week, orders were sent for Glas's release, and somewhat later a strong reprimand followed to the Governor. Consul Pasley reported that Glas was released on 14 October, but his freedom was shortlived. Glas and his wife and child, who had come to join him at Teneriffe, were murdered in the course of a mutiny on the ship which was bringing them back to England. ²²

Few of Rochford's representations on behalf of British subjects were quite as serious as this case, and none as tragic in its final outcome. Most of his applications were quite routine petty affairs, and usually met with some form of satisfaction. They were, however, a constant and time-consuming diversion. Having pointed this out earlier to Halifax, Rochford took care to remind Conway in October 1765 ;

"I make frequent Applications here for His Majesty's trading Subjects, which are not always worth troubling you with . ." ²³

Such applications resulted from a wide variety of causes, ranging from the extradition of a man wanted for an insurance fraud, ²⁴ petitions from the assignees of bankrupts with interests in Spain, ²⁵

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22. SP 94/171, f.124, Rochford to Conway, 26 August 1765, Separate ;
 ibid., f.162, Rochford to Conway, 6 September 1765, Separate ;
 SP 94/172, f.71, Conway to Rochford, 8 November 1765 ; ibid., f.89,
 Rochford to Conway, 28 October 1765 ; ibid., f.161, Porten to
 Conway, 25 November 1765 ; SP 94/173, f.5, Conway to Rochford,
 3 January 1766. An embroidered account of Glas's career and his
 death aboard the Sandwich appears in the Annual Register (1766),
 pp.85-88.
23. SP 94/172, f.58, Rochford to Conway, 21 October 1765.
24. SP 94/171, f.73, Rochford to Conway, 29 July 1765.
25. SP 94/172, f.182, Conway to Rochford, 31 December 1765 ;
 SP 94/173, f.146, Conway to Rochford, 11 March 1766.

complaints of delays from excessive quarantine restrictions,²⁶ claims for goods salvaged from wrecks,²⁷ and the usual claims for the recovery of debts from Spanish merchants.²⁸ Where the facts were clear and no room for dispute existed, these matters were usually settled fairly readily, especially when Rochford pressed them vigorously. For example in October 1765 his protest at the unwarranted seizure of goods from an English vessel which had run aground near Cadiz resulted in a reprimand for the local Subdelegate of Marine.²⁹ But more complex cases which involved a conflict of testimony or a disputed right were likely to suffer considerable delays. The "strange perplexed affair" of the Pasley brothers of Teneriffe, an attempt to reclaim what they considered to be an unlawful prize of war, gave Rochford and Porten many headaches in the course of 1765, as they strove to secure a settlement without appeal to the Council of the Hacienda, which was certain to hand down an adverse judgement.³⁰

In many cases either the initial complaint or supporting evidence came from the nearest British Consul. This was certainly the first channel of intelligence when anything faintly resembling an international incident occurred. Fortunately Rochford had only one such alarm, in May 1764, when a British merchantman exchanged broadsides with eight Spanish xebecs off Cartagena. Both sides sustained injuries and damage, but luckily nobody was killed, and

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- 26. SP 94/165, f.211, Rochford to Halifax, 22 December 1763.
 - 27. Nassau Papers, E/3, Rochford to Captain Miln, 17 April 1764 ; (not in SP) Rochford here gives advice on the Captain's duty under English law to recover all he can, selling at the best possible prices, in order to reimburse the owners and satisfy the insurers.
 - 28. SP 94/168, f.231, Halifax to Rochford, 21 December 1764 ; f.233 is the claim by Claude Passavant of Exeter for payment for a shipment of woollen goods.
 - 29. SP 94/172, f.68, Ariaga to Rochford, 14 October 1765 ; Nassau Papers, E/15 (translation, in Porten's hand).
 - 30. SP 94/170, fos.25 and 194, Rochford to Halifax, 15 March and 21 June 1765 ; Nassau Papers, E/12, (translation, in Rochford's hand) Copy, Squilaci to Grimaldi, Aranjuez, 15 May 1765.

since the altercation had apparently stemmed from a simple misunderstanding exaggerated by language differences, Rochford had no difficulty securing a prompt satisfaction at Madrid. Grimaldi even offered to have the Commander of the Xebecs punished, but Rochford thought he had suffered enough already.³¹

Even before Rochford's arrival in Spain, Halifax had instructed each of the consuls to report to the new ambassador any disabilities suffered by British traders at the Spanish ports, "both from Innovations introduced, and any Infringement, or Breach of subsisting Treaties."³² In theory, Porten as Consul-General handled the correspondence with the consuls, sending them regular instalments of advice and encouragement, but he found that their return correspondence consisted chiefly of complaints about petty abuses and infringements by harbour authorities, "which have caused sufficient Occupations to His Excellency" [Rochford] in obtaining redress.³³ Even so, Rochford could not avoid corresponding directly with some consuls himself, though presumably in close consultation with Porten, not only giving advice but even at times instructions for their guidance on certain delicate points.³⁴

31. SP 94/167, f.50, Rochford to Halifax, 30 May 1764 ; *ibid.*, f.60, Halifax to Rochford, 15 June 1764.

32. SP 94/165, f.149, Beawes to Halifax, 21 October 1763.

33. SP 94/169, f.138, Porten to Halifax, 11 February 1765.

34. Lists of British consuls in Spain and at the Mediterranean ports are contained in SP 94/169, f.156, (Spain ; 5 March 1765) ; and SP 94/169, f.7 (Mediterranean ports ; 1 January 1765). These may be of some value for their additions to the lists in D.B. Horn, The British Diplomatic Service, 1689-1789 (Oxford, 1961), pp.254-255.

Spain : Porten (Madrid) ; Coxon (Alicant) ; Forrester (Barcelona) [Vice-Consul until Witham's arrival] ; Jesson (Cadiz) [another Vice-Consul, replacing Tilson who died 24 May 1764, until the arrival of Hardy as Consul] ; Nesbitt (Canary Islands) succeeded by Pasley ; Bomeester (Cartagena) ; Banks (Corunna) ; Aiskell (Malaga) ; Beawes (Seville and St Lucar) [This is presumably the author of Lex Mercatoria Rediviva (London, 1752), cited in Horn, p.239].

Mediterranean and adjacent areas : Madrid, Naples, Genoa, Messina, Nice, Malaga, Venice, Oporto, Barcelona, Cadiz, Corunna, Majorca, Leghorn, Zant, Madeira, Seville, Alicant, Cartagena, Lisbon, Cagliari.

Rochford's direct dealings with the British Consuls in Spain also cast some light upon the problems faced by the Consular Service in the eighteenth century. An instance of this was Rochford's successful intervention on behalf of Aiskell at Malaga early in 1764, to secure that Consul's release from imprisonment for not contributing towards the maintenance of the local militia ; Squilaci wrote a stern letter to the Governor telling him not to pester foreign consuls in this respect. ³⁵

But the Governor had his revenge within a year, and also occasioned one of Rochford's most useful pieces of work on behalf of the Consuls in Spain. In January 1765 Aiskell was arrested for delegating his duties to a Vice-Consul who was not 'of the same Nation, and who had not received a Royal cedula authorizing him to act. This was not an isolated case. The revival of this old decree in 1764 had caused great confusion, for deputies of the same nationality were not easily found at some ports. Rochford immediately protested at Madrid, and secured Aiskell's release, along with that of the Dutch Consul who had been similarly charged. But he then went a step further, and after some discussion with the Spanish ministers obtained clarification for the future in a fresh ruling that foreign consuls might name their own Vice-Consuls and Agents, whatever their nationality, so long as the Spanish Court had no objection to the individual so named. Halifax praised Rochford's "Zeal and Prudence" in securing this most useful ruling, but perhaps the final comment was that of Stanier Porten, who later wrote ; "This was looked upon by our Consuls and Merchants as so very advantageous a point gained for the Commerce that they acknowledged their thanks in Letters to His Excellency." ³⁶

35. SP 94/166, f.196, Rochford to Halifax, 2 April 1764 ; *ibid.*, f.226, Halifax to Rochford, 15 May 1764.

36. SP 94/169, fos.59, 83, Rochford to Halifax, 14 and 18 January 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.124, Halifax to Rochford, 19 February 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.195, Aiskell to Halifax, 21 February 1765. Porten's circular of 15 January is at f.102. For his later comment, see SP 78/273, f.276, Porten to Shelburne, 16 December 1767.

Possibly in reaction to this signal concession, the Spanish government thereafter examined all such consular applications more rigorously, and in March 1765 the new British Consul for Barcelona, Abraham Whitham, was denied the cedula on his commission, because a Spanish officer thought he remembered dining with him at Gibraltar in the uniform of the Royal Engineers. He was, however, only a clerk in that service, but Porten found that he would have to obtain a certificate from London to that effect before a cedula would be issued at Madrid. ³⁷

Rochford's correspondence with the Spanish ministers on matters relating to the Consuls often demanded as much care and foresight as might be expected of strictly diplomatic correspondence. When Coxon at Alicante reported that great partiality was shown to French vessels there in respect of the visitation, and that (he had reason to believe) on orders from Madrid, Rochford had to tread very warily, and surely asked Porten for his advice in composing a Note to Squilaci. That minister responded promptly, in "a most obliging and satisfactory Answer," which promised a letter to the Administrator of Customs instructing him to administer the treaties more fairly. Yet Halifax gave Rochford all the credit for this minor success, attributing it to his original Note ; "Your Lordship seems to have drawn it very prudently, in such Manner as not to preclude yourself from reclaiming (if it should hereafter upon any other occasion become necessary) that Right of Exemption from Visitation" which had been secured for Britain by previous treaties. ³⁸

37. SP 94/170, f.43 (copy), Porten to Whitham, 2 March 1765.

38. SP 94/166, f.88, Rochford to Halifax, 13 February 1764 ; *ibid.*, f.104, Halifax to Rochford, 9 March 1764.

Quite apart from acting in defence of the Consuls at Madrid, Rochford also acted on their behalf with the British government. His dealings with Bomeester, the Consul at Cartagena, illustrate both these aspects. In February 1766, Rochford laid a complaint against the Governor of Cartagena for his interference to restore the Mediterranean pass which Bomeester had confiscated from a Mahonese vessel. This was not only unwarrantable intervention between the Consul and one of his fellow British subjects, but was also contrary to the provisions of the Royal cedula authorizing the Consul's appointment. Rochford had no difficulty in securing a prompt reprimand of the Governor.³⁹ It is interesting to note in passing that Bomeester's confiscation was probably in consequence of a suggestion by Rochford himself the year before, that the cancellation of temporary war-time passavants ought to be supplemented by a proclamation against the purchase of captured Admiralty passes from the French.⁴⁰

Doubtless encouraged by Rochford's action on his behalf against the Governor of Cartagena, Bomeester made a request in the following month for some sort of salary as Consul. Rochford fully supported this request, pointing out that while it was necessary to have a British Consul at Cartagena, the consulage there was very small, and that Bomeester had exhausted his private means in the two years since his appointment as Consul. This request was not only granted, but Bomeester's salary of £ 100 a year was back-dated to January 1766.⁴¹

39. SP 94/173, f.142, Rochford to Conway, 17 February 1766.

40. A further Proclamation was issued in response to Rochford's suggestion ; SP 94/169, f.136, Rochford to Halifax, 11 February 1765; SP 94/169, f.152, Halifax to Rochford, 5 March 1765.

41. SP 94/173, f.162, Bomeester to Conway, 11 March 1766 ; *ibid.*, f.189, Rochford to Conway, 17 March 1766 ; SP 94/174, f.164, Richmond to Bomeester, 22 July 1766.

The chief entrepot for the Anglo-Spanish trade of the eighteenth century was of course Cadiz, and it is scarcely surprising that here lay the source of Rochford's fullest direct dealings with a Consul and English Factory in Spain. The large number of vessels trading at Cadiz, and its primacy as the port of the annual silver fleet to the Indies, made Cadiz the centre for bullion smuggling, from which flowed Rochford's two main problems involving British subjects there ; the visitation of British vessels, and the imprisonment of British sailors on suspicion of smuggling.⁴²

The visitation problem concerned Rochford from the very start of his embassy, though he deferred making any complaint at first ; "avoiding, as long as may be convenient, entering on any disagreeable Affair here."⁴³ But by May 1764, Rochford had grown anxious that unless some stand was taken soon, the Spanish ministers might take further liberties with British shipping. The present practice of visitation was, Rochford claimed, an innovation since 1760. No objection was held to the initial health inspection, nor to the customs search itself, but only to the surprise searches made after the ship's manifest had been cleared. Rochford therefore instructed Tilson, the British Consul at Cadiz, to lodge a formal protest. Rochford also spoke to Squilaci, who maintained that this surprise visitation was mainly aimed at the French one-decked ships which were notorious for smuggling, and that British ships were also visited to prevent any accusations of partiality. Rochford carefully refrained from seeming to admit or accept this explanation, and

42. McLachlan, Trade and Peace with Old Spain, pp.14-15, has further details of bullion smuggling at Cadiz.

43. SP 94/165, f.203, Rochford to Halifax, 12 December 1763, Separate.

merely stressed how clearly the existing treaties established Britain's right to exemption from such visitation. As a partial solution, possibly at Porten's suggestion, Rochford sent orders to all British Consuls in Spain that they should add a proviso to the additional Declaration on their cargo manifests, reiterating the British claim to exemption. This precaution was praised by Halifax as being "extremely Proper & Necessary," and he added that the King himself greatly approved Rochford's "care and attention" in this "important Affair."⁴⁴

The problem of British sailors being arrested on suspicion of smuggling was not capable of control by such precautions, however, and throughout his early years at Madrid, Rochford had to apply for the release of such detainees quite frequently. In most cases, clear proof of guilt was hard to establish, and Rochford had little trouble securing pardons and prompt release.⁴⁵ But one class of prisoners, those arrested in the West Indies, proved much more difficult to free, and finally drove Rochford to some research to find out why. He discovered that while the treaties relating to Old Spain provided for the release of the crew when a ship was confiscated for carrying contraband, the treaties relating to America were silent on this point. As a result, the Spanish authorities were very reluctant to release sailors arrested there. Rochford therefore took the matter up with Grimaldi, who held fast to the letter of the treaties and insisted that such prisoners had to be tried according to Spanish law. This did not satisfy Rochford; "What I thought I had a fair Right to insist upon was that at least

44. SP 94/167, f.23, Rochford to Halifax, 21 May 1764 ; *ibid.*, f.36, Rochford to Halifax, 28 May 1764 ; SP 94/167, f.60, Halifax to Rochford, 15 June 1764.

45. SP 94/166, f.141, Halifax to Rochford, 27 March 1764 ; *ibid.*, f.196, Rochford to Halifax, 2 April 1764 ; SP 94/166, f.220, Rochford to Halifax, 16 April 1764 ; Nassau Papers, E/14, Rochford to Captain Stewart, 4 October 1764 (two of his sailors detained on suspicion of smuggling tobacco) ; Nassau Papers, E/7, (original, in Spanish) Squilaci to Rochford, 9 January 1765.

since they were brought into Europe there was no pretence for detaining them here." Rochford accordingly took his appeal to Ariaga, in whose department the matter properly lay, and within a fortnight Rochford was gratified to hear that orders had been issued for the release of the ten British sailors then languishing at Cadiz on charges laid in the West Indies.⁴⁶

Cadiz obviously required an active and strong-minded British Consul. It was therefore with dismay as well as sorrow that Rochford received news in May 1764 of the death of Consul Tilson at Cadiz. Tilson had been a personal friend of Porten, who immediately took in hand the arrangements for his burial and the sale of his property.⁴⁷ The death of the Consul had serious effects upon the English factory at Cadiz, which seems to have been divided between turbulent factions at this time. Rochford appealed to Halifax for a swift replacement ; or else "infinite mischiefs will arise." Before his death, Tilson had appointed as his Agent the younger Bewicke, with the full approval of the Factory. But Bewicke now had occasion to return to England, and named Jesson as his successor. Rochford himself recommended Jesson as the most suitable person to be Consul there, from his long experience and standing among the English at Cadiz. But Jesson's rivals within the community had procured the appointment of Dalrymple and French as acting Agents, even though Jesson had been recognized by the Spanish Governor as acting Consul. All parties concerned appealed to Rochford for guidance, and he recommended that in the meantime

46. SP 94/171, f.7, Rochford to Halifax, 1 July 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.24, Rochford to Halifax, 15 July 1765.

47. SP 94/167, f.33, Archdekin to Halifax, 25 May 1764 ; having already informed Rochford and Porten at Madrid ; Tilson died 24 May 1764. SP 94/167, f.54, Porten to Halifax, 30 May 1764.

Jesson was the obvious man to act as Consul ; Dalrymple had been declared bankrupt as recently as 1762. This advice was, as usual, fully approved by Halifax.⁴⁸

Much of the division within the English factory at Cadiz arose from the large body of Irish Catholics established there as merchants. Rochford found that this group caused great disturbances and trouble "by changing their Nation as it suited their conveniency." This was not confined to the Irish ; it was common for Swedes and Danes to claim to be English one day in order to benefit from the exemptions and privileges of the commercial treaties in Britain's favour, and to revert to their own nationality on the next, as it suited them. This thorny problem was at last resolved by a new regulation early in 1764 which required all foreign merchants and traders in Spain to register their nationality and sign their names with their Consul every year. Some of the British traders first asked Rochford whether they should comply, but while he doubted if he had sufficient authority so to direct them, he admitted that he considered it a fair and beneficial measure, to which the King of Spain had every right.⁴⁹

Thus thwarted, the Irish contingent at Cadiz attempted another expedient, which was to obtain the Governor's consent to clear their ships returning to England without paying the National or "Factory" Duty. Rochford's predecessor Keene had submitted many Memorials on this but without any success. Rochford therefore

48. SP 94/167, f.50, Rochford to Halifax, 30 May 1764, Separate ; SP 94/168, f.219, Rochford to Halifax, 22 November 1764 ; *ibid.*, f.227, Halifax to Rochford, 18 December 1764.

49. SP 94/166, f.69, Rochford to Halifax, 30 January 1764 ; SP 94/168, f.101, Rochford to Halifax, 17 September 1764. On the English factory at Cadiz, and the Irish Catholics, see McLachlan, Trade and Peace with Old Spain, pp.140, 144.

studied very closely the original Act of Parliament of 1736 which granted this duty, and there found a clause which made masters who failed to pay the National Duty on leaving Spain liable to a three-fold duty on arrival in England. Rochford was then able to argue cogently to Squilaci that lenience at Cadiz only made the Irish merchants liable to a greater penalty, and that it would save everybody a lot of trouble if the Spanish authorities insisted that the Irish pay the duty to the Factory. Squilaci readily agreed with this reasoning, and sent the necessary orders to Cadiz. Rochford expected the Governor to quibble, but claimed he had "a remedy prepared for that." Since nothing more is heard of this problem, it must be assumed that the remedy was effective. ⁵⁰

The prevention of such evasions and abuses was the duty of the Consul, and it would therefore have been with relief that Rochford learned of the appointment of Josiah Hardy as Consul for Cadiz towards the end of 1764. As an outsider, Hardy would not be quite so susceptible to the factional pressures within the Factory, and as brother to Admiral Hardy he would have a measure of prestige to assist him in composing differences. Hardy arrived at Cadiz in May 1765, and as Rochford had predicted, matters there very soon settled back into something resembling normality. Hardy's only complaint in the remainder of Rochford's embassy was that his mail was being interfered with by the Spanish postal authorities. It is a measure of Porten's capacity as Consul-General that he immediately devised a cipher for Hardy's use in corresponding with him. ⁵¹

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50. SP 94/168, f.101, Rochford to Halifax, 17 September 1764 ; Nassau Papers, E/6 (copy, in Porten's hand), Rochford to Squilaci, n.d., (? September, 1764), memorial regarding the duty at Cadiz.
51. SP 94/168, f.227, Halifax to Rochford, 18 December 1764 ; SP 94/170, f.187, Hardy to Halifax, 21 May 1765 (reporting his arrival at Cadiz on 16 May) ; SP 94/174, f.23, Porten to Conway, 13 May 1766.

Porten's counterpart, the Spanish Consul-General in England, did not inspire Rochford with the same confidence. In fact, Rochford thought it necessary to warn Halifax to keep an eye on him :

"I know this Ventades particularly well ; He was Commissary to the Spanish Troops during all the Campaign in Portugal ; He talks English perfectly, pretends a great fondness for our Country . . . but notwithstanding his Partiality to us, he has always been the Instrument this Court has made use of to debauch our Workmen. 52

The enticement of skilled craftsmen, especially shipbuilders and those experienced in the woollen industry, was a sore point between Britain and Spain throughout this period, and Rochford particularly requested the Consuls to report any such cases to him at once. 53

Fortunately, none of the Consuls found cause to notify Rochford of any fresh enticement of British workmen in the course of his embassy. Their reports were full of shipping news, requests for leave or salary increases, complaints at abuses such as have been touched on above, and the usual personal gossip which marks the consular correspondence of the eighteenth century apart from that of today. There were no firm rules about such reportage, at least not before the Board of Trade directive of 1765, and some Consuls reported direct to London when they were moved to report at all. As a result, Rochford asked Halifax early in 1765 if he would direct the Consuls to send him duplicates of such reports made to London, as he and Porten were perhaps better placed to judge of their accuracy and importance. 54

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52. SP 94/168, f.157, Rochford to Halifax, 27 October 1764, Separate & Secret.
53. SP 94/166, f.226, Halifax to Rochford, 15 May 1764 ; see also McLachlan Trade and Peace, pp.215-217, for earlier examples.
54. SP 94/169, f.136, Rochford to Halifax, 11 February 1765. See also D.B. Horn, "The Board of Trade and Consular Reports," English Historical Review, LIV (1939), 476-480.

Rochford summed up his dealings with the Consuls in Spain, and his opinion of their reports, shortly before the close of his embassy in 1766 :

"I must beg leave to observe that they are seldom well-informed, take many things upon Trust, and though they mean very well, their Intelligence is not always to be depended on ; They would willingly put themselves upon a greater footing here than they are entitled to, and any Disappointment they meet with naturally exasperates them" 55

Nevertheless, their information was better than nothing at all in respect of Spain's capacity to commence another war against England, and this consideration undoubtedly helps explain Rochford's constant attention to matters consular and commercial. Lists of warships and their readiness were obviously the most directly useful of the Consuls' intelligence reports, yet Rochford drew warning even from the ordinary shipping lists. In the same dispatch of January 1766, Rochford merely observed without wishing to seem officious or to give any alarm that there were then sixty-three merchant ships at Cadiz, and reminded Conway that despite the treaties, when the Spanish declare war, they "seize on every thing in their power." Rochford thought this "worth consideration whenever we should be obliged to break with them." 55

He had already seen a similar instance of the vulnerability of Britain's overseas resources at the outbreak of war, and moreover had taken steps to remedy the weakness. This was the fund at Cadiz into which the proceeds of consulage and the National or "Factory" Duty were paid. Before the end of 1764, Rochford had suggested that this fund ought to be transferred through a reputable banker

55. SP 94/173, f.88, Rochford to Conway, 22 January 1766, Separate.

in regular instalments to the Treasury or the Bank of England, to prevent the seizure of such monies by Spain in the event of war being declared unexpectedly. Halifax readily appreciated the point, and gave Consul Hardy instructions to remit regular payments from this fund in future. ⁵⁶

This small but highly useful suggestion seems typical of Rochford's whole approach to his relations with the British Consuls in Spain, his support of British trading interests, and his concern to fulfil the relevant clauses of his general Instructions. Though the degree of his indebtedness to Porten as Consul-General may have been considerable, Rochford nevertheless showed himself at Madrid to be no less prudent, attentive, and successful in these matters than he was as Envoy at Turin. At both posts, his attention to matters consular and commercial constitutes an important aspect of his work as a diplomat, not to be overlooked or lightly dismissed.

56. SP 94/168, f.219, Rochford to Halifax, 22 November 1764 ; *ibid.*, f.227, Halifax to Rochford, 18 December 1764.

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- 349-355 Rochford's vigilance over Gibraltar ; Crillon as Commander of Spanish Camp ; February 1766 storm ; land communications closed by Crillon ; plans for attack rejected at Madrid ; West Indian affairs ; O'Reilly at Madrid ; difficulties in Mexico ; rumours of war with England ; Conway anxious at Alva's rise ; state of ministry, January 1766.
- 355-359 unpopularity of Squilaci's reforms ; Palm Sunday, 23 March 1766, revolt breaks out at Madrid ; Squilaci evades the mob ; Rochford greeted by the mob on 24 March ; popular cries ; confusion at Court ; massacre of Walloon Guards ; Charles III concedes rioters' principal demands ; amnesty granted.
- 359-360 Royal Family flees at night with Squilaci to Aranjuez ; Tuesday 25 March, a day of riotous processions ; crowds pass Rochford's house ; remarkably well-behaved ; deputation to Aranjuez ; King's reply proclaimed ; riots cease ; Easter devotions proceed.
- 360-365 foreign ministers visit Aranjuez, 29 March ; Rochford dines with Grimaldi ; grantees in high spirits ; Squilaci leaves for exile in Sicily ; his successors ; Aranda banishes Ensenada ; Rochford's opinion as to causes and instigators.
- 366-7 Rochford's application for home leave ; his accident at the Escorial ; audiences of leave, 12 May 1766 ; did he pawn his plate and jewels ? ; leaves Madrid.
- 368-372 Rochford chosen to replace Richmond at Paris, July 1766 ; insists on Porten for Secretary ; Shelburne becomes Secretary of State ; difficulty of replacing Rochford at Madrid.

The Later Phase at Madrid, 1765-66,
and the Fall of Squilaci.

Rochford returned from his leave in Paris by way of Bayonne, arriving at Madrid on 6 June 1765, where he had barely time to dash off a report of his arrival to catch the post, before proceeding to Aranjuez for audiences with the Spanish King and Royal Family on the following day.¹ He had been greeted at Madrid not only by his Secretary, de Visme, and Stanier Porten, the British Consul-General, but also by a distinguished visitor, Prince George Augustus of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, a cousin to George III's consort, Queen Charlotte Sophia. Rochford took care to show the Prince "every attention" during his month's stay at Madrid, and was later favoured with a letter thanking him, belatedly but warmly, for his "goodness & politeness" at this time.²

Rochford found everything quiet and peaceful on the political scene at Madrid, but at Court there was mounting excitement at the forthcoming wedding of the Prince of Asturias to a Princess of Parma, for which preparations were already well in hand. The Princess was expected to arrive in Spain in August, and the wedding was to take place as soon as she arrived. However, a shadow was cast over the preparations by the death of her father

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1. SP 94/170, f.164, f.164, de Visme to Halifax, 3 June 1765 ; *ibid.*, fos.179 and 181, Rochford to Halifax, 6 and 10 June 1765.
 2. The Prince left Madrid for Barcelona on 5 July, proceeding from there to Italy for the Grand Tour ; SP 94/170, f.183, de Visme to Halifax, 10 June 1765 ; SP 94/171, f.16, Rochford to Halifax, 8 July 1765 ; Bodleian Library, Oxford, Lyell MSS, Empt.37, f.14, Rochford's Madrid Notebook, 5 July 1765 ; The W.S. Lewis/Walpole Library, Farmington, Mass., autograph letter from Prince George Augustus of Mecklenburg to Rochford, dated at Rome, 24 May 1766 (Rochford has written 21 May 1766 on the back) ; I am indebted to W.S. Lewis for a photostat of this letter.

shortly before her departure for Spain, and though the marriage ceremony went ahead as planned, on 4 September 1765, with Rochford among the ambassadors and foreign ministers forming the first circle around the Royal Family, the public festivities were postponed until early in December.³

In the meantime, there was much speculation regarding the appointment of a Regent for the new Duke of Parma, who was yet a minor. Rochford was told in great secrecy that the King himself favoured Prince Masserano, the Spanish Ambassador in London, firstly to avoid sending him to Paris, where he would merely dance to Choiseul's tune, and secondly because he wanted at Parma someone upon whom he could depend. Rochford's standing at the Spanish Court, and the excellence of his sources of intelligence, are testified by the fact that this was known only to a very select few, and to no other foreign minister. It was not until the end of August that Grimaldi confirmed this information, in strictest confidence, adding that it had first been suggested by the Queen Mother. However, he had no desire to see so useful a minister as Masserano consigned to the limbo of a petty Italian court, and with Choiseul's support, Grimaldi succeeded in convincing the King not to send Masserano to Parma. Rochford was greatly dismayed at this signal triumph by the French party at Madrid.⁴

The wedding festivities took place in the second week of December, with the usual accoutrements of triumphal arches, portraits of the Royal Family, "emblematical Figures," military displays,

3. SP 94/171, f.78, Rochford to Conway, 29 July 1765, Separate ; *ibid.*, fos.122 and 150, Rochford to Conway, 26 August and 6 September 1765.

4. SP 94/171, f.102, Rochford to Conway, 8 August 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.124, Rochford to Conway, 26 August 1765, Separate ; *ibid.*, f.148, Rochford to Conway, 6 September 1765.

and fireworks. The buildings on each of the main streets were hung with brilliant tapestries and silk hangings, while at night all houses of any consequence were illuminated. Rochford's own house in the street of St Jerome was likewise illuminated for the duration of the festivities, which must have relieved some of the customary tedium of social life at Madrid. As Rochford described it, "All last week was one continual Scene of Hurry and Entertainment." ⁵

Yet behind the extravagance and frivolity of such Court entertainments, the realities of diplomacy and political power remained, commanding Rochford's constant attention. Though he had found all quiet on his return to Madrid from leave, Rochford heard rumours that changes were imminent in the Spanish ministry, and that Squilaci's credit with the King was on the decline. However, upon further enquiry, Rochford concluded that these rumours were no more than idle gossip, arising from a remark the King had made about Squilaci as a joke, which was taken seriously by those who heard it. Though Squilaci's customary dilatoriness had been criticized by Ossun, the French Ambassador, who was rash enough to suggest that Ensenada was the better man for the job, Rochford thought Squilaci's personal credit with the King remained as great as ever, and he concluded "there has been no very material Alteration during my Absence." ⁶

Grimaldi remained pre-eminent among the Spanish ministers, and Squilaci still possessed "an apparent Intimacy" with the French Ambassador. Even so, while Squilaci felt secure from any attack by

5. SP 94/172, f.185, Rochford to Conway, 16 December 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.187, de Visme's summary of the week's activity, for the London Gazette.

6. SP 94/170, f.191, Rochford to Halifax, 17 June 1765.

Grimaldi so long as he retained the King's personal favour, he was apprehensive of the threat posed by Ensenada's scarcely concealed desire to return to office. ⁷

If Rochford had no change to report from Madrid, the very opposite was true of his Spanish counterpart in London, Prince Masserano, who reported in July 1765 the replacement of the Grenville ministry with that of Newcastle's friends, now headed by the Marquis of Rockingham. Halifax and Sandwich, as Secretaries of State, were replaced in their respective departments by H.S. Conway for the Southern and the Duke of Grafton for the Northern. ⁸

Though the new ministry did not contain the redoubtable Pitt, as the Bourbon powers had feared it might, there was much speculation at Madrid and Paris over the policies to be adopted by Britain towards her Continental neighbours. Even without Pitt, there were fears that the new ministry might emulate his stated views regarding a sterner line towards the powers of the Family Compact. Accordingly, even before hearing from Conway, Rochford took it upon himself to reassure the Spanish King and his ministers that there was not the least likelihood of any change in Britain's resolve to uphold and defend the peace treaties. In doing so, he exactly anticipated the reassurances of Conway's circular letter of 19 July. ⁹

Rochford was plainly delighted at the appointment of his old school-friend as Southern Secretary, and his pleasure was fully

7. SP 94/171, f.111, Rochford to Conway, 19 August 1765.

8. For a useful summary of this change of ministry, see J.Steven Watson, The Reign of George III (Oxford, 1960), pp.109-111.

9. SP 94/171, f.96, Rochford to Conway, 5 August 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.11, Conway to Rochford, (circular) 19 July 1765.

reciprocated by Conway, who wrote of Rochford's "kind & friendly" congratulatory letter ; "I saw in it the natural Language of an old Friend & Acquaintance," which gave ten times the satisfaction of all his other conventional congratulations.¹⁰ Yet Rochford's pleasure was not without self-interest. Hertford had been recalled from Paris to become Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and from his departure about 10 July 1765, the coveted Paris embassy was vacant. Rochford evidently hoped that his old school-friend would put in a word for him in the right quarters, but Conway was sorry to inform Rochford that the matter had already been settled ; Charles Lennox, Duke of Richmond, was named for Paris.¹¹

Inheriting such outstanding problems between Britain and Spain as the Manila Ransom claim and recent Spanish menaces towards Portugal, Conway was anxious to be thoroughly informed from Madrid. He asked Rochford for a full report, along the lines of his first masterly dispatches of 13 January 1764, adding whatever fresh details occurred under the various heads of his Instructions.¹²

Rochford had already reported during August on Spain's financial situation and her readiness to renew hostilities. He had succeeded in drawing Grimaldi out after dinner one evening, as the wine flowed freely, and Grimaldi had been indiscreet enough to confess that they had just enough "to live from Hand to Mouth, but absolutely no Ressources in case of an Emergency." He quickly

10. SP 94/171, f.142, Conway to Rochford, 19 September 1765, Private.

11. Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, 1689-1789, p.22 ; SP 94/171, f.142, Conway to Rochford, 19 September 1765, Private.

12. SP 94/171, f.64, Conway to Rochford, 16 August 1765, on the Manila Ransom ; see also above, pp.294-5.

retracted this, as an overstatement, and Rochford was amused to observe how Grimaldi endeavoured to palliate his slip ; "awkwardly, for a long Time" afterwards. ¹³ From his own enquiries, Rochford found that Squilaci had been using "all sorts of Methods to borrow Money," since "the Distresses of this Government are so great." He thought it especially significant that Squilaci had even been reduced to asking the advice of his erstwhile rival, Ensenada, on ways and means. ¹⁴

In his reply to Conway's request for up-to-date news and impressions, Rochford therefore stressed Spain's weak financial situation ; "They never were in so bad a Condition . . . Their Coiffers are not only empty but . . . what renders their Condition still worse, They have absolutely no Resources." Admittedly, after prodigious efforts, there had been some improvement in their armed forces, with the provinces supplying recruits and the press gangs rounding up vagabonds in the major towns, so that the Cavalry was at last complete and "in good Condition." But few of the Infantry regiments were complete ; "the Whole in no good Condition, and not above forty thousand Men fit to take the Field." As for the Navy, Rochford's estimation was very much the same ; "Their Fleet is ill-manned, and in a bad condition," as demonstrated by the length of time taken to outfit a small squadron to carry the Infanta Archduchess to Genoa. Rochford candidly admitted that he could not "exactly ascertain the Number they have here, and in America," which was said to be about sixty capital ships ; "Yet from the Accounts I have," he doubted if they could equip and man more than thirty in the event of another war. ¹⁵

13. SP 94/171, f.96, Rochford to Conway, 5 August 1765.

14. SP 94/171, f.111, Rochford to Conway, 19 August 1765.

15. SP 94/171, f.150, Rochford to Conway, 6 September 1765, Private.

The conclusion which Rochford drew from his various observations was that Spain would not willingly resume hostilities while she remained unprepared, but that her ultimate intentions were beyond doubt, and it was only a matter of time before her tone would change :

"You see Sir by this State of Affairs how little they ought to wish for a new War, and it is my firm Belief They will do their utmost to avoid it, and will endeavour by all Sorts of Means to gain time ; but they will not easily forget their late Losses, and will as soon as ever They are able, hold a different Language. How far it may be advisable to be beforehand with them, I must leave to others to determine."

The hint that Britain might be giving Spain too ample an opportunity to rearm was unmistakable. Yet on the other hand, Rochford was sure the nation as a whole did not wish for another war so soon after the last ; "The Apprehension of all degrees of People at it is not to be described . ." Though the francophile elements at Court sought to convince Charles III of Britain's animosity towards him, Rochford was alert and "not deficient in my Endeavours to prevent the bad Effects of such sinister Insinuations." ¹⁶

Conway agreed that Spain seemed likely to opt for peace in the meantime, and wholeheartedly shared Rochford's suspicion towards her ultimate intentions. After her intransigence over the Manila Ransom and her threats against Portugal, Conway wondered "can we, My Lord, think her Professions very Sincere ? . . it is by her Actions, not by her Words, We must judge of her Intentions." He therefore urged Rochford not to relax his vigilance, but to

16. SP 94/171, f.150, Rochford to Conway, 6 September 1765, Private. Rochford concluded with the hope that "my feeble Endeavours to serve His Majesty may meet with His Approbation."

keep a close watch on the state of the Spanish armed forces and their readiness for war. Rochford's modest wish that his efforts might be approved was surely answered by Conway's generous testimony to "the Judgment & Activity with which You have been always ready to exert Yourself." ¹⁷

Rochford found no cause to alter his estimation of Spain's intentions in the remainder of his embassy at Madrid. Early in 1766, he repeated his belief that Spain was far from ready for another war, adding

"What will be their System, No one can absolutely determine ; Much will depend upon the Court of France ; But as far as I can see into their Views, Both that Court and this will seek to gain time."

He then went on to repeat, almost in the same words, the warning hinted at in his September report : "How far it is consistent with the King's Views to allow them that Consideration I must leave to wiser heads than my own to determine." ¹⁸

Rochford himself, wise or not, left no doubt of his own views in diplomatic circles at Madrid. Both Ossun and Béliardi reported to Choiseul conversations with Rochford in September 1765 in which he stated flatly that he thought his government was giving France and Spain too much time to prepare for another war. ¹⁹ Ossun later gave a full account of his conversation with Rochford, which is worth recounting at length :

"Milord Rochford added that as far as he was concerned he was too well informed about the forces and resources

17. SP 94/171, f.142, Conway to Rochford, 19 September 1765, Private.

18. SP 94/173, f.88, Rochford to Conway, 22 January 1766, Separate.

19. AECP Espagne, 542 ; Ossun to Choiseul, 5 September 1765, and Béliardi to Choiseul, 9 September 1765 ; quoted in R.E. Abarca, "Bourbon 'revanche' against England ; the Balance of Power, 1763-1770" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Notre Dame, 1965), pp.249-250

of Spain to give England the least worry respecting the war preparations taking place here. For he knew that, when all was said, they could not succeed in getting the different parts of the Spanish American Empire ready to meet any English attack. He was persuaded that, in spite of all these efforts, England would find the Spaniards very weak in case she attacked them. He then went on to speak of the land and sea forces of Spain with the greatest contempt and commented on the impossibility of Spain to find enough treasure or resources ever to dare attack England by herself alone. But he could not say as much for France, about which he spoke to me with the greatest respect and esteem. He confided to me that if the French Crown were given enough time to recuperate from its losses, England would have everything to fear from her Revanche and very little hope of making any further conquests at her expense." 20

This remarkable conversation has provoked the comment from one writer that Rochford committed an inexcusable error for a diplomat, in underestimating Spain's capacity to harm Britain. This same writer also accuses Rochford of arrogant contempt for the Bourbons, and claims that this so enraged Choiseul as to make him despise Rochford. Yet from the evidence which this writer provides in such abundance it is clear that Rochford's estimation of the Spanish armed forces accorded very closely with that accepted by Choiseul, and Rochford's own warnings that Britain was giving Spain too much time to rearm show that he was fully alert to the slow but steady improvement in Spain's preparedness. 21

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20. AECP Espagne, 542 ; Ossun to Choiseul, 23 September 1765 ; quoted in Abarca, op.cit. (see note 19), pp.199-200. (Abarca's translation.)
21. Abarca, p.200. On the very next page, Abarca states that while Rochford's information was similar to Ossun's (they came from similar sources, after all), his estimate of Spain's readiness agreed with Choiseul's. Compare Abarca, pp.178-182, 195-202, and see also above, pp.254, 260. As for Choiseul's personal dislike of Rochford, it will be seen below (pp.531-2) that this stemmed from rather different causes than Rochford's "arrogant contempt".

Though Conway had little faith in the verbal assurances of the Spanish ministers, it was at least of some significance that such assurances were not lacking. Early in October 1765, Rochford reported a long and interesting conversation he had had with Grimaldi a few days before. Grimaldi had "solemnly assured" Rochford that there was nothing within reason that Spain would not do in order to live well with Britain. When Rochford responded by questioning Spain's obligations under the Family Compact, Grimaldi admitted that he looked upon this alliance almost as "a Child of his own," yet hastened to assure Rochford that even if France wanted to draw Spain into a new war, they would first have to lay all their plans and reasons on the table, and allow Spain to decide for herself. This was especially so regarding Canada. Grimaldi remarked that Choiseul must remember the things he said at the peace negotiations ; he "could not have the Face" to ask for Spain's assistance in further hostilities to recover Canada for France.

Rochford had earlier noticed how proud Grimaldi was of his role as Spanish plenipotentiary at the Paris peace conference, and used this to draw him out ; "the Subject is agreeable to him, & many Indiscretions fall from him." As Grimaldi went on to explain, in view of his position as one of the architects of the Family Compact, and on account of the hostility of many of the Old Spanish grandees, who "talk publickly of the Scrape it is likely to bring them into," he had to give the best turn possible to Spain's relationship with France while remaining wary of French designs for a 'revanche' against England. Rochford concluded, "It is evident therefore he must be very cautious in the Advice he gives, whilst he has this Check upon him." 22

Quite apart from the question of a Bourbon 'revanche' and the readiness of the powers of the Family Compact, Rochford was equally alert in the later phase of his Madrid embassy to the dangers for British trade offered by French commercial rivalry in the Iberian Peninsula. While British trade with Spain enjoyed favoured status in the first half of the eighteenth century, that of French traders in Spain was so privileged as to be superior in some respects to the native Spanish themselves. But after the Seven Years' War, Squilaci had imposed a rigorously literal interpretation on Article 24 of the Peace of Paris, greatly limiting French trading privileges in Spain, resulting in much acrimony and heated discussion between the two nations in the course of 1764.²³ Hence Choiseul's anxiety to negotiate a new commercial treaty, or at least some amelioration of the strict Spanish interpretation of Article 24. Béliardi returned to Madrid from leave not long after Rochford, in July 1765, with instructions to obtain a new agreement restoring earlier privileges and resolving the disputes over silver smuggling and visitation of shipping, in which France had fared much worse than Britain since the end of the war.²⁴

However, Squilaci refused to deal directly with Béliardi, and the discussions were conducted by his First Secretary, Palayeula. Béliardi privately told Rochford that he was not interested in any secret agreements ; nothing less than a public treaty would do.²⁵

23. Article 24 is printed in Z.E. Rashed, The Peace of Paris, 1763 (Liverpool, 1951), pp.226-7, and in L. Blart, Les rapports de la France et de l'Espagne après le Pacte de Famille (Paris, 1915), pp.48-9. For a useful discussion of Franco-Spanish commercial relations after 1763, see Blart, pp.43-70, in particular pp.51-65 for the disagreements of 1764. See also, V.L. Brown, Studies in the History of Spain (1929), pp.39-62 ; especially pp.48-51 on this phase.

24. Blart, p.47, note 2 (which extends to p.49) demolishes the legend started by Favier in 1771 and repeated by Flassan, Muret, and F. Rousseau, of Béliardi's political influence at Madrid, supplanting the French Ambassador, Ossun.

25. SP 94/173, f.88, Rochford to Conway, 22 January 1766, Separate.

Rochford had earlier heard from Grimaldi that Choiseul had censured Ossun, even threatening him with recall, for not attending more to commercial matters. Grimaldi also told Rochford that he had received three or four letters from Choiseul complaining of the great partiality shown to British vessels at Spanish ports. Rochford was gratified to think that this was so at least at some ports, though he was sure it was not at Cadiz, "where the French are entirely running away with the Linnen Trade," because the Spanish officers were notoriously lenient in evaluating such goods. ²⁶ Despite Grimaldi's assurances, Rochford remained apprehensive lest Spain concede more specific privileges to the French trading in Spain.

Early in January 1766 he obtained the reassurance he desired, in "an interesting Conversation" with Squilaci, who began by assuring Rochford of his continued personal regard ; he said "he had the most unbounded confidence in me." After some preliminary discussion, Squilaci then "entered into the insignificancy of the Family Compact," observing that Spain was bound by it only to furnish certain succours in time of war ; "but by no means obliged to act totis viribus, nor to enter into their [that is, France's] Quarrels." ²⁷

Encouraged by Squilaci's "very confidential Manner," Rochford casually remarked that he had heard the French Consul was aiming at making a new commercial treaty, in hopes of gaining some advantage for French traders in Spain. Rochford felt he

26. SP 94/169, f.158, Rochford to Halifax, 9 February 1765.

27. SP 94/173, f.98, Rochford to Conway, 27 January 1766.

should remind Squilaci that by their treaties with Britain, they could not extend favours to any other nation without also offering the same to Britain. Rochford was delighted with Squilaci's rejoinder to this ; "what fell from him on this Occasion I confess gave me the greatest Pleasure."

Squilaci briefly confirmed what Rochford already knew of his First Secretary's talks with Béliardi over the past eight months, then went on to relate that on the Sunday just previous, Béliardi had in exasperation at his lack of progress approached Squilaci himself. The minister had responded by making two vital stipulations as preconditions of any constructive negotiations : Firstly, that France should give an absolute security not to allow smuggling by French subjects in Old or New Spain, and secondly, that any treaty proposals must first be shown to the Dutch and British ministers in case they contravened existing agreements with those two nations. At this, Squilaci added with a faint smile, "the Abbé lost all patience, at finding, after eight months' Negotiation, he had proceeded upon so wrong a Notion," for these were conditions France would never accept. Squilaci concluded the conversation by saying that Rochford could make what use he wished of this information, so long as he did not commit him in name, or let it be known it was he who had told Rochford. This caused Rochford to add, prophetically, at the end of his dispatch, that Squilaci was fearful of the French influence at Madrid, "well knowing that he would not be the first Spanish Minister who has fallen a Victim to their Resentment." 28

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28. SP 94/173, f.98, Rochford to Conway, 27 January 1766. Béliardi finally got his new Convention signed on 2 January 1768, long after Rochford had left Madrid and Squilaci had been replaced as Finance Minister by the more accommodating Musquiz. Thereafter, the operation of the treaties with Britain became more stringent, and Anglo-Spanish trade relations entered quite a different phase ; see Blart, Les rapports de la France et de l'Espagne (1915), pp.66-68, and Brown, Studies in the History of Spain (1929), pp.52-62.

Though by the end of his earlier phase at Madrid he had given up any hope of using Squilaci as a direct advocate of British interests in the Spanish government, it is clear that Rochford's care to remain on good personal terms with the Finance minister yielded some very useful information from time to time. Squilaci tended to echo Grimaldi on matters of foreign policy, as in the Manila Ransom affair, but Rochford found him to be "more easily frightened" by mention of the expenses of another war, as Squilaci was convinced this would infallibly mean his ruin. ²⁹

Amongst the diplomatic corps at Madrid, Rochford ruefully noted that the French Ambassador held an ascendancy in most matters, thanks to his close connexion with Grimaldi ; Ossun dined "constantly" at Grimaldi's house. ³⁰ The francophile party at Madrid was yet further strengthened in the middle part of 1765 by the presence of Fuentes, who had returned on a six-month leave of absence from his Paris embassy. Rochford found Fuentes much more sympathetic towards the French point of view as a result of his residence in Paris than he had seemed in their palmy days together at Turin. But Fuentes showed no inclination to return to Paris at the end of his leave. While he still drew ambassadorial pay, and could enjoy the company of his many friends at Court, he saw no pressing reason to depart. He was finally ordered to return in September 1765, just after Rochford had renewed Britain's demand for the Manila Ransom ; "The hurrying him away in this Manner is certainly owing to the present critical Situation of Affairs." ³¹

29. SP 94/171, f.152, Rochford to Conway, 6 September 1765.

30. SP 94/174, f.27, de Visme to Conway, 19 May 1766.

31. SP 94/170, f.55, Rochford to Halifax, 1 April 1765 ; SP 94/171, fos. 192, 219, 233, Rochford to Conway, 10, 17, 23 September 1765 ; on the Manila Ransom, see above, pp.295-8.

Remarkably enough, in view of the tenacity of French influence in Sweden at this time,³² Rochford was on excellent terms with the Swedish Envoy at Madrid, Count Philip Creutz ; "who manages his affairs with great skill and is very serviceable to me." ³³ Though he had found his old friend from Turin days, Roubion, something of a disappointment as the Sardinian Ambassador, Rochford remained "a good deal connected with him." Even so, his secretiveness in matters political caused Rochford to ask Conway for advice on "how his Court at present stands with Regard to Us," though Rochford guessed from his own experience of the Court of Turin that they "had nothing so much to dread as the Union of the Houses of Austria and Bourbon." ³⁴

Rochford's closest ally amongst the diplomatic corps at Madrid, apart from the Dutch minister, remained the Portuguese Ambassador, de Sa, who was able to help Rochford correct a rumour circulating amongst the capitals of Europe late in 1765. Conway asked Rochford at the very start of 1766 if he could throw any light on reports that Spain and France were trying to tempt Portugal into abandoning her alliance with England, even as far as to joining the Family Compact. Rochford already knew that some of the foreign ministers from northern Europe had been reporting rumours to this effect, but he had not taken them seriously, and after further enquiry he discovered that they did so on conjecture only, after a chance remark by Grimaldi that since the northern powers seemed to

32. See D.B. Horn, Great Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1967), p.259, and the Introduction to British Diplomatic Instructions, Volume V, Sweden 1727-1789, edited by J.F. Chance (Camden 3rd Series, London, 1928).

33. Sandwich MSS, Rochford to Halifax, 11 March 1765 ; printed in Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence, 1763-1765, edited by F. Spencer (Manchester, 1961), p.292.

34. SP 94/171, f.150, Rochford to Conway, 6 September 1765, Private.

be uniting more closely, perhaps those of the south should form a stronger alliance. De Sa, however, told Rochford that his Court would only laugh at such overtures, in the unlikely event of their being made. ³⁵

After the exchange of notes between Spain and Portugal earlier in 1765 over their disputed claims in South America, relations between the two neighbouring Crowns had, it is true, thawed a little from a mutual reluctance to provoke an international crisis. ³⁶ Grimaldi was anxious to convince Rochford that Spain had no ulterior designs on Brazil, and in a conversation on the subject in October, Rochford found Grimaldi "more open and free on that Subject than ever I found him before." He explained that the orders sent to their Governor at Buenos Aires were intended merely to prevent the very considerable contraband trade being carried on by the Portuguese in that part of the world. Yet as Rochford later reflected, if under cover of preventing the contraband trade the Spanish succeed in ruining legitimate Portuguese trade in South America, "the consequence will be equally fatal." ³⁷ This sober reflection was given point by the fact that Nova Colonia remained under virtual blockade throughout that year. ³⁸

It was given yet further point by Spain's evident intention to keep Portugal in awe of a possible invasion. The British Consul at Cadiz reported early in January 1766 significant troop movements

35. SP 94/173, f.5, Conway to Rochford, 3 January 1766 ; *ibid.*, f.111, Rochford to Conway, 3 February 1766.

36. see above, pp.262-269. A useful brief account of Spanish-Portuguese relations after 1763 is found in V.L. Brown, Studies in the History of Spain (1929), pp.63-91.

37. SP 94/172, f.83, Rochford to Conway, 24 October 1765, Secret.

38. Brown, Studies, p.69.

towards the coasts and the border with Portugal, and in the same month the Consul at Corunna reported the arrival of a large consignment of gunpowder from France, with similar quantities destined for Cadiz and Cartagena.³⁹ Conway wrote to inform Rochford that the Portuguese Ambassador in London had told him that Spain now had perhaps six capital ships with frigates as well, and land forces totalling 2,000 men, on the Rio de la Plata.⁴⁰

But Rochford was inclined to believe that all this was mostly just to make a brave show ; "more In Terrorem and to prevent than with a Design to offend, which requires a Work of Time, for they have at present neither Money, Troops, nor Marine." He trusted in Squilaci's caution and fear for his place to restrain the more bellicose members of the Spanish military, who were still smarting under the humiliations of the abortive invasion of Portugal in 1762. Rochford could not conceal a trace of uneasiness on this account ; "some of the most Principal amongst them are Romantick enough to believe they are deficient in nothing."⁴¹ But like the earlier war scare, this one also soon blew over, with the troops being recalled to other duties, and both Courts offering fresh assurances of their devotion to peace.⁴²

For a time during his later phase at Madrid, Rochford had more reason to be anxious for Gibraltar than Portugal, with the appointment of a Frenchman, the Marquis de Crillon, as Commander

39. SP 94/173, f.32, Hardy to Conway, 17 January 1766 ; *ibid.*, f.88, Rochford to Conway, 22 January 1766, Separate ; *ibid.*, f.107, Banks to Conway, 29 January 1766.

40. SP 94/173, f.91, Conway to Rochford, 11 February 1766.

41. SP 94/173, f.88, Rochford to Conway, 22 January 1766, Separate.

42. Brown, Studies, pp.69-70. There was a minor skirmish on the River Plate in June 1767, which was so out of keeping with the cordiality prevailing at home that the affray was blamed on the Jesuits! Thereafter all remained quiet until 1774 ; Brown, Studies, pp.71-73.

of the Spanish camp facing Gibraltar. Crillon was notorious for his hatred of the English, and Rochford thought his appointment "a little extraordinary," as if he had been set to watch this vital British outpost.⁴³ But all remained quiet for the remainder of 1765, Rochford's only disquiet arising from a truce between Spain and Morocco, which he feared might prevent the supply of provisions to Gibraltar from Ceuta.⁴⁴

Early in February 1766, however, a violent storm wrought havoc at Gibraltar, and notwithstanding his protestations of peace and friendship to General Cornwallis, Crillon immediately closed the border and imposed an embargo on goods arriving from other parts of Spain for Gibraltar. More than this, he sent an express to Madrid suggesting a surprise attack while Gibraltar remained in disarray from the storm. Charles III would have nothing to do with such a treacherous scheme in time of peace, and promptly rejected the suggestion. But Crillon's habitual indiscretion meant that the proposal was common knowledge within a matter of weeks, and the Spanish government had no alternative but to recall him, sending the more conciliatory General Vandermark in his place.⁴⁵

Crillon claimed that he had closed land communications only as a result of an Algerine corsair having brought a prize into Gibraltar in the previous week. Under Article 10 of the Treaty of Utrecht, Gibraltar was a closed port to Algerine warships. The same article also prohibited land communications between Spain and Gibraltar, so that when Rochford raised the matter with Grimaldi,

43. SP 94/170, f.55, Rochford to Halifax, 1 April 1765.

44. SP 94/172, f.89, Rochford to Conway, 28 October 1765 ; *ibid.*, f.150, Rochford to Conway, 18 November 1765.

45. SP 94/173, fos.113 and 158, Hardy to Conway, 7 and 25 February 1766 ; *ibid.*, f.156, Rochford to Conway, 24 February 1766. See also the account in Stetson Conn, Gibraltar in British Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century (New Haven, 1942), pp.175-6.

he received the predictable response that since the British had infringed the tenth Article of Utrecht, it was only fair that Spain should cease to countenance its infringement in the other respect. Rochford could only protest that while doubt existed as to the legality of the prize and the status of the Algerine, it was rather violent of Crillon to cut off land communications so abruptly. ⁴⁶

Any fears of an imminent Spanish attack on Gibraltar were allayed by the report of some British officers sent out by General Irwin to spy on the Spanish camp ; in their opinion, the Spanish were nowhere near ready to commence a siege, and would need at least two or three years' preparation before doing so. ⁴⁷ By the close of Rochford's Madrid embassy, the affairs of Gibraltar seemed back to normal, with a revival of the usual complaints about the smuggling of tobacco through Gibraltar, and concern on the British side about the supply of provisions. ⁴⁸

Rochford also kept an alert eye on the affairs of Spain in Mexico and the West Indies, in so far as they had any bearing on his observation of Spain's preparedness for another war. He was therefore most interested in the return to Spain in July 1765 of the Irishman, O'Reilly, who had distinguished himself in the campaign against Portugal in 1762, achieving the rank of Major-General in the Spanish army. O'Reilly had a commission to encourage trade at Porto Rico, but Rochford heard that he had quarrelled with

46. SP 94/173, f.156, Rochford to Conway, 24 February 1766.

47. Conn, Gibraltar in British Diplomacy, p.176, citing Colonial Office 91/15, Irwin to Conway, 6 April 1766.

48. SP 94/174, fos. 79 and 88, de Visme to Richmond, 18 June 1766, Separate, and Secret.

the Governor of Havana, and had returned to Spain without leave. This was a matter of some interest, for while Grimaldi held that he would probably be sent back at once with a sharp reprimand, the French Ambassador predicted that O'Reilly would be well received at Court. Ossun was in fact right ; O'Reilly was graciously received at Madrid on 5 August, and allowed to remain there until given a fresh commission in the Americas. ⁴⁹

Matters were far from well in Spain's American empire at this time. Despite the "great silence" maintained at Madrid on the situation in Mexico, Rochford had no difficulty obtaining intelligence of the bitter disagreements between the Viceroy, Cruilles, and the Commander, Villalba, of the desertions from the army which necessitated the use of press gangs in Spain to procure reinforcements, and finally of the Pascalan revolt in 1765. Rochford reported fully on these matters in March 1766, explaining ;

"The greatest Secrecy is kept at this Court in relation to their American Affairs ; all circumstantial Letters are intercepted, and Publick Reports are too vague or too contradictory to be transmitted" [as reports to London] . ⁵⁰

Rochford's chief sources of information were of course the British Consuls, especially Hardy at Cadiz, who reported in that same month not only that orders had been sent to suspend the reform programme in Mexico and to stop the treasure flota from sailing until a stronger escort was available, but that he had seen a letter from an English merchant warning his friends ; "there may be a War with England." ⁵¹

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49. SP 94/171, fos.54 and 96, Rochford to Halifax, 22 July 1765, and Rochford to Conway, 5 August 1765. O'Reilly was later given command of 3,000 men to strengthen Spanish forts in Louisiana, where he arrived in August 1769 ; V.L. Brown, "Anglo-Spanish Relations in America . . ." Hispanic American Historical Review, V (1922), 369-70.
50. SP 94/170, fos.120 and 131, de Visme to Halifax, 25 April and 6 May 1765 ; SP 94/171, f.18, Rochford to Halifax, 8 July 1765, Separate ; SP 94/172, f.136, Rochford to Conway, 11 November 1765 ; SP 94/173, f.183, Rochford to Conway, 12 March 1766, Separate.
51. SP 94/173, f.204, Hardy to Conway, 28 March 1766.

Rochford had been hearing rumours of war at Madrid ever since he had renewed Britain's demand for the Manila Ransom in September 1765, and as yet had seen little reason to attach much importance to them. But by March 1766 he had grown somewhat more anxious, for a rather unusual reason. He was still convinced that Spain

"has no immediate View of quarrelling with Us ;
they will prepare themselves little by little,
and whenever They are ready, or any Event should
happen to hasten on a War, They will in that case
begin by [an attack on] Portugal . . "

Even so, he was disquieted to find in conversation with the leading personalities at the Spanish Court that the Old Spaniards were so averse to the torrent of French influence on the King's policies that they openly wished for a war, quite soon, arguing that Spain would certainly be beaten and humiliated, forcing the King to dismiss his two Italian ministers (Grimaldi and Squilaci) as the chief promoters of French influence in Spain. ⁵²

Conway had also been anxious that changes might be imminent in the Spanish ministry, from various indications that the Duke of Alva was gaining favour with the King at Squilaci's expense. One of these was a report that Alva had been present at an interview between the King and the French Ambassador. But Rochford was inclined to doubt the truth of this report ; the King's movements were so well-known and so regular, such an interview could not have escaped notice at Court. However, Rochford did know that both Ossun and Alva had been consulted (separately) about the tone of the Spanish Reply on the Manila Ransom. Rochford was not surprised that reports of Alva's intrigues had received such wide currency, "as the foreign

52. SP 94/173, f.193, Rochford to Conway, 24 March 1766, Separate.

Ministers here have for some Months past employed their Pens in writing Volumes of incoherent Ideas about his Conduct and Views." Alva was admittedly an extremely able and active man, Rochford conceded, friendly with the Prince of Asturias, and as an Old Spaniard highly acceptable to the Nation ; "but I am well informed the King of Spain has no confidence in him." Nor, it seems, did Grimaldi and the francophile party, and the reason was not difficult to discern ; Alva was a declared partisan of the Court of Vienna, and on that account the French did not really trust him.⁵³

Rochford's conclusions were based upon personal acquaintance and observation, as well as the opinions of others, as may be gathered from an interesting encounter in mid-November 1765. Rochford was at Court for the King's levee, and looked in on Grimaldi, only to find Alva with him, poring over a map of Madrid. Rochford excused himself and withdrew, but they called him to join them, and he spent above an hour discussing with them ways to improve and ornament the city, measuring the streets and comparing the main buildings. Rochford noted that Grimaldi and Alva debated warmly, though politely, the minister reproving the Duke for building in Andalusia instead of settling at Madrid, to which Alva retorted he had no money to build, "as that rogue Squilaci had prevailed with the King . . . to deprive him of a considerable part of his property."⁵⁴

Grimaldi undoubtedly shared Alva's resentment of Squilaci, as there was little love lost between the two principal ministers. Rochford noted a minor instance in January 1766 in which Squilaci by-passed Grimaldi over a matter properly belonging to the Foreign Minister's department, concerning the traffic in slaves between

53. SP 94/172, f.169, Rochford to Conway, 2 December 1765 ; Conway replied early in January that Rochford's account led him to discredit his previous information regarding Alva ; SP 94/173, f.5, Conway to Rochford, 3 January 1766.

54. SP 94/172, f.169, Rochford to Conway, 2 December 1765.

Algiers and Cadiz by the Venetian Consul at the former place. Squilaci must have obtained a decision from the King even as Grimaldi was telling the French and Sardinian Ambassadors that the Venetian would still be allowed to come to Cadiz. Squilaci was evidently secure in his assurance of the King's personal favour, though Rochford knew he "dreads on many Accounts the least Possibility of a Rupture" ; Grimaldi on the other hand was serenely confident of his ascendancy in the Spanish ministry, and Rochford wrote scornfully that Grimaldi "thinks himself a Great Politician, and ventures puffing upon the Ideas he has formed of the present Situation of Europe." 55

In fact, Squilaci's days as a minister were already numbered. The first clear sign of impending trouble was the sharp rise in the price of bread towards the end of 1765, which provoked "great clamours amongst the people of Madrid." A mob even stopped the Queen Mother's coach, crying out that they were starving. Next day, the King sent for Squilaci and reproached him for not attending to the proper distribution of corn in the kingdom. Rochford heard from one who was present that Squilaci had replied it was impossible to reconcile domestic economy with the finances required to prepare for war. 56

But the final straw was Squilaci's attempt in March 1766 to regulate the dress of the madrileños. The traditional long cloak and wide-brimmed hat of the citizens of Madrid represented practical adaptations to the muddy streets and the habit of throwing slops from the windows into the street below. But Squilaci, and Charles III himself, felt that their reforms in paving and lighting the streets

55. SP 94/173, f.88, Rochford to Conway, 22 January 1766, Separate ; on Grimaldi's notions regarding the state of Europe, see above pp. 347-8.

56. SP 94/172, f.177, Rochford to Conway, 9 December 1765, Separate and Secret.

ought to be reflected in more civilized fashions of dress, namely, in shorter cloaks and the three-cornered hats in the French style familiar in every other European capital. It was not only the measure itself which annoyed the populace, seeming as it was an attempt to impose French manners, but the way in which it was enforced. Contemporary prints show officers at work on the streets, cutting cloaks to the regulation length and pinning up the hats of offenders, imposing a fine for good measure. The public resentment was enormous, and it focussed itself upon the one minister ; as Rochford reported, "Squilaci in particular is abhorred, and the Threats that have been posted up publicly against him are of a very alarming Nature." 57

The storm broke on the evening of Palm Sunday, 23 March, when a riotous crowd marched on Squilaci's house. The minister was not there, however, and the crowd amused itself by smashing all the windows and threatening to set the house on fire. The crowd moved on to Grimaldi's house, where they again broke windows, and through the city, the lamps which were the King's pride and joy were all smashed. Troops were despatched to protect Squilaci's house, and when the mob tried to set it on fire, the troops fired on the crowd. Squilaci and his family were in fact on their way back to Madrid from a visit to the country ; "He narrowly escaped being massacred, [Rochford recorded] but by going round the outskirts of the Town till he got to the Palace, he avoided the People. His Lady was met by the Dutch Envoy who carried her to his House where she passed the Night." The city was left to the rioters, and throughout that night, "a great deal of Mischief was done in the Streets." 58

57. SP 94/173, f.193, Rochford to Conway, 24 March 1766, Separate. See also, Petrie, King Charles III of Spain, pp.118-9, and Henderson, "Charles III of Spain ; an Enlightened Despot," History Today, XVIII (1968), pp.681-2.

58. SP 94/173, f.191, Rochford to Conway, 24 March 1766.

Next morning, Monday 24 March, Rochford set out as usual for the Palace to attend the King's levee, but he had not gone far before the crowds stopped his coach, obliging him to walk the rest of the way "through the People." What might have been a terrifying experience proved, however, something of a triumphal procession. The crowd had been shouting their slogan, Viva el Rey y muera Squilaci ! But on seeing the British Ambassador walking in their midst, the cry changed to Viva Inglaterra y muera la Francia, or simply Abajo Francia!

At Court that morning, Rochford found "the greatest Confusion" prevailing. Messages passed to and fro between the King and the rioters, through the mediation of the Dukes of Medina Celi and Arcos, who addressed the multitude from a balcony of the Palace. Inside, Rochford observed "the Ministers and Military People going backwards and forwards in the greatest confusion." But the rioters continued simply to demand Squilaci's head, and no compromise could be found. The foreign ministers remained at the Palace throughout the day, while rioting continued in the city, until at three in the afternoon they were informed that the King would not stir out today ; "upon which we all retired home."

On his way home, Rochford noticed the bodies of soldiers lying dead in the streets, and determined "to night I shall not stir out of my House," for fear of "some great Event." The bodies were those of the King's Walloon Guards, who had borne the brunt of peace-keeping tasks, since the regular troops and the militia were reluctant to act against their fellow citizens.

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59. SP 94/173, f.191, Rochford to Conway, 24 March 1766. The account of the Madrid riots printed in the Annual Register (1766), 14-18, adds further details to Rochford's account, particularly on the incident which sparked off the riot on Palm Sunday.

But in fact, not long after the foreign ministers had left the Palace, the King did stir out, to appear on a balcony and concede to the populace its principal demands. These were, firstly and most obviously, to dismiss Squilaci, and to repeal his edict against long cloaks and wide-brimmed hats. But also indicative of the causes of the revolt, the crowd demanded an immediate reduction in the price of essential commodities, bread, oil, soap, and bacon, together with the suppression of the monopoly which had been set up to supply the city with its provisions. Finally, as might be expected, the crowd demanded a general pardon for itself.

Charles III agreed to these demands, promising to appoint a Spaniard as Squilaci's successor, and gave his consent to each article as it was read out by a friar beside him with crucifix held high. That evening a general amnesty was proclaimed, and the crowds melted away, as the citizens returned to their homes and the streets became quiet and deserted once more. ⁶⁰

But at midnight, in a step which has been sharply criticized and debated, the King and Royal Family quietly slipped out of the Palace and took coach for Aranjuez, accompanied by only a small escort of troops. Squilaci and Grimaldi accompanied the Royal party, and an hour later, the French and Neapolitan Ambassadors followed them to Aranjuez.

Next morning, when the news spread throughout Madrid that the King had fled, the townsfolk believed that the capitulation had been violated, "and rose again in a more violent Manner." Vast crowds assembled and seized the arms and drums of the militia, and proceeded

60. SP 94/173, f.206, Rochford to Conway, 31 March 1766, enclosing (fos.211-214) copies of the edicts giving effect to the King's concessions.

to surround the city, guarding the gates, and not allowing anybody to leave on pain of death. The surviving Walloon Guards had marched to Aranjuez, and the Spanish Corps de Garde had shut themselves up in the old Palace, the Buen Retiro, so that the city was throughout Tuesday 25 March and the night that followed entirely at the mercy of the mob.

Rochford wrote that this day was "passed in a most tumultuous Manner," which caused him to keep his household indoors ; there was "no stirring out without being insulted and running the greatest Risk of One's Life." Even so, he thought the crowds surprisingly well-behaved on the whole ; "the Town was left forty-eight hours at the Disposal of the People, but to do them Justice they did not offer to enter into any House except Taverns and such Places to get Victuals and Drink." Great crowds, five and six hundred strong, streamed through the streets, shouting the now familiar slogans calling for Squilaci's death. At night, the women and children carried torches and the palm branches which had been distributed in the churches on Palm Sunday.

Rochford watched these crowds, as they passed "numberless times by my House" ; yet they offered "no Incivility or Disrespect, and some of them cried out as they went by, Viva el Embaxador de Inglaterra!" However, the spectacle was less reassuring elsewhere in the city, where the rioters fired almost continuous volleys of musket-fire into the air, and vented their fury on the bodies of the Walloon Guards slaughtered the previous day, dragging them to a central place and mutilating them before burning their mangled limbs on a great bonfire. ⁶¹

61. SP 94/173, f.206, Rochford to Conway, 31 March 1766.

On the morning of Wednesday 26 March, a deputation was sent to Aranjuez to demand the King's return, which brought back a letter addressed to the Council of Castile declaring that the King was unwell, had been twice bled, and could not as yet return to Madrid. But the letter went on, confirming the concessions given on the Monday, announcing the dismissal of Squilaci and repeating the general pardon, provided the people surrendered their arms and peacefully resumed their former occupations.

This letter was proclaimed in every part of the city, and greeted with cheers. The populace returned the muskets and drums to the Guard-houses, and shook hands with the militia as they emerged from the Buen Retiro. For the first time in three days, people could walk in the streets with their hats cocked in the French fashion without being molested or shown violence. By the afternoon, the whole city was again quiet and peaceful. Rochford noted this with some amazement ; "if one had not seen the Insurrection, It could not have been believed that there had been one." ⁶²

The next two days, Thursday and Friday, 27-28 March, witnessed the Easter celebrations, and in Rochford's words were "days of great Devotion here." No coaches were allowed in the streets, it being usual for the people to go on foot to visit all the churches in the city, so that the foreign ministers remaining in Madrid could not stir out until Saturday morning, 29 March.

That morning, the foreign ministers all went out to Aranjuez, where they found the King in perfect health ; he had been out shooting that very morning. Rochford dined with Grimaldi and Squilaci's two principal Secretaries in the War Department, who seemed quite reconciled to the turn of events, though Grimaldi was still not without apprehension for his own position. Back at

62. SP 94/173, f.206, Rochford to Conway, 31 March 1766.

Madrid, Rochford found "the greatest Quiet and Tranquility" ; the insurrection had ended as neatly and swiftly as it had begun.⁶³

This apparent neatness, together with several other features of the revolt, intrigued Rochford and stimulated him to do his utmost to discover "the true Source of the Insurrection." He had no doubt that it had either been planned in advance or was adroitly exploited by the Judges and the principal grandees, from "the great regularity" with which it was conducted, the single-minded demand of the mob over several days for the removal of Squilaci, and the universal contempt of the rioters for the money that was flung to them from the Palace, together with the remarkably small amount of damage and the virtual absence of looting.

Whilst at the Palace on Monday 24 March, amidst all the confusion, Rochford "had leisure for several Hours to examine the Looks and Behaviour of all Sorts of People." Though an attack on the Palace and a general massacre seemed imminent, the grandees who would ordinarily be most frightened by a rising of the common people "did not however shew the least Apprehension." Rochford talked "some time with M. Ensenada, who was in great Spirits the whole Time ; Many others shewed the same Behaviour." Only Squilaci and his closest friends were at all fearful.⁶⁴

Some of the other foreign ministers believed Grimaldi and the French party at Madrid were the prime movers of the revolt, and that Choiseul was determined to get rid of Squilaci because of

63. SP 94/173, f.206, Rochford to Conway, 31 March 1766. The account in Coxe's Memoirs of the Kings of Spain (1815), III, 316-323, is an almost word for word pastiche of Rochford's dispatches ; that in Blart, Les Rapports de la France et de l'Espagne (1915), pp.95-6, is based on the reports of Ossun and Béliardi, in AECF Espagne 545, fos.63 and 331, of 27 march and 28 April 1766.

64. SP 94/173, f.215, Rochford to Conway, 31 March 1766, Separate.

his reluctance to divert sufficient funds into war preparations. Rochford thought this a plausible explanation, but if true, then the Old Spaniards had been made to look very foolish, and would soon realise this ; "then perhaps we may see the same scene again for the Removal of Grimaldi." That minister, Rochford noted, "affects however at present a great Tranquillity ; but if I know Mankind at all, he is far from being yet at his Ease."

Squilaci's fall was all the more remarkable for occurring at the height of the King's personal favour towards him. Charles III had declared at his levee, before all the assembled nobles, that if he were reduced to "but one Bit of Bread," he would share that morsel with Squilaci. It would be even simpler now to effect Grimaldi's removal, since the King's known aversion to violent measures and bloodshed made it unlikely that he would suppress another rising. It was said at Court that he had removed himself to Aranjuez only in the hope of preventing further disturbances. ⁶⁵

Naturally, the Court maintained a profound silence officially regarding the causes of the insurrection, and the only public indications of the government's reaction to events were the ministerial changes following Squilaci's fall. The ex-minister and his family had departed under escort on the morning of 25 March for Cartagena, whence they embarked for exile in Italy. Squilaci was replaced as Finance Minister by his First Secretary in that Department, Don Miguel Musquiz. The War Department went to Don Juan de Muniain. Both were 'Old Spaniards,' and therefore acceptable to the nation at large. There was some surprise, however, at Muniain's

65. SP 94/173, f.215, Rochford to Conway, 31 March 1766, Separate.

appointment to the War Ministry, which it was expected would have been given to that venerable warrior, the Conde d'Aranda. But Aranda was appointed to the Presidency of Castile, which carried with it the post of Governor of Madrid, a position not only of crucial importance at this time for the restoration of order, but sharing in some measure the Royal authority itself. He had a reputation for firmness, if not severity, and would have the assistance of some 10,000 troops who were being drawn towards Madrid. But almost his first act, significantly enough, was to order Ensenada to quit the capital and not to appear before the King again. ⁶⁶

There was much speculation over this banishment, and many people concluded that Ensenada must have been implicated in planning the revolt. But Rochford was inclined to think this a very mild punishment if that were true, and noted that Ensenada's closest friends at Court remained perfectly at ease. Aranda had long been a sworn enemy to Ensenada, and Rochford saw this order as a piece of personal spite. ⁶⁷

Rochford's own conclusions regarding the cause of the insurrection were that although the French party may have been the first movers in a bid to remove Squilaci, the grandees and the clergy saw their opportunity and turned it to their advantage, to force the King to introduce a greater Spanish element into his government, with a view to devoting the country's energies to internal reform rather than a French-led 'revanche' against England. ⁶⁸

66. SP 94/173, f.218, Rochford to Conway, 7 April 1766 ; *ibid.*, fos. 226 and 235, Rochford to Conway, 14 and 28 April 1766.

67. SP 94/173, f.228, Rochford to Conway, 21 April 1766 ; *ibid.*, f.235, Rochford to Conway, 28 April 1766.

68. SP 94/174, f.20, Rochford to Conway, 5 May 1766, Separate.

Rochford had been his usual diligent self in making every possible enquiry into the causes of the revolt ; "Whenever I have had a safe Opportunity, I have talked on this Subject with those I could trust." Presumably from these conversations arose "a Number of new Circumstances, which every Day come to light, [from which] it appears that the Plot was very deeply laid, and that even the Clergy had a great share in it." ⁶⁹ From his confidants at Court, Rochford heard that some of the grandees in the King's Council openly blamed Squilaci for the attack on Portugal in 1762, and for the continuance of the Family Compact, and that their present sentiments were to avoid if at all possible any quarrel with Britain or Portugal, while the government concentrated on internal reforms and the establishment of order and prosperity in Spain. With prudent management, Spain might then become a great power once again. ⁷⁰

Rochford concluded from this information that, "if I do not err in my Judgment, this last affair will in the end turn out advantageous to Us," and that France would lose a large measure of her influence in Spain. Rochford already had some hints of this ; "I have received the strongest assurances from Musquiz, that there shall be the greatest Impartiality possible in all commercial Affairs, and I really believe there will ; but as he has not so much Authority as M. de Squilaci had, I am afraid there will be a great deal more Dilatoriness." ⁷¹

69. SP 94/173, f.218, Rochford to Conway, 7 April 1766.

70. SP 94/174, f.20, Rochford to Conway, 5 May 1766, Separate.

71. SP 94/174, f.20, Rochford to Conway, 5 May 1766, Separate. Rochford was not the only one to expect a reduction of French influence at Madrid ; Choiseul was alarmed for the very survival of the Family Compact ; see AECP Espagne 545, f.186, Choiseul to Ossun, 8 April 1766, printed (in part) in Blart, Rapports, p.98.

Another indication of a possible lapse in French influence at Madrid was the remarkable silence maintained regarding offers of troops and other help from France, while every praise was given of the similar offer of aid from Portugal. Charles III was impressed and greatly pleased by the Portuguese offer, which in fact was a major step marking a resumption of cordial relations between the two neighbours. But Rochford pointed out to Conway that there was good reason to keep quiet about France's offer of assistance to quell any recurrence of the revolt ; the mere mention of French troops entering Spain would be enough to spark of an even greater national uprising. ⁷²

Nevertheless, Grimaldi remained in office, and retained the King's confidence for some years to come. Rochford was sure that he would continue to be "an Agent for the French," but hoped he would be "so far controlled, that the Venom will be dispersed before it can take effect." Rochford's Secretary, de Visme, later heard that Grimaldi had actually asked for his demission, knowing that he was odious to the people and fearing that he had lost the King's confidence ; but Charles III had refused to dismiss him. ⁷³

Grimaldi wisely left all decision-making to the comité named by the King to carry on government in the meantime, consisting of himself, Ariaga, Musquiz, and Muniain, assisted by Alva, Fuentes, Sotomayor, and Mascones ; Wall told Rochford that he preferred not to interfere, though he was consulted. Aranda took care of all domestic arrangements, and the King seemed to rely as much upon the advice of his Confessor as upon that of his ministers. ⁷⁴

72. SP 94/173, fos.226, 228, and 235, Rochford to Conway, 14, 21, and 28 April 1766.

73. SP 94/174, f.20, Rochford to Conway, 5 May 1766, Separate ; *ibid.*, f.37, de Visme to Conway, 26 May 1766.

74. SP 94/173, f.235, Rochford to Conway, 28 April 1766 ; see also, Coxé, Memoirs, III, 321-3, and Blart, Rapports, pp.97-8.

The Madrid uprising of 1766 provides a suitably dramatic climax to Rochford's career as British Ambassador in Spain ; whatever the truth regarding its causes, which are still debated,⁷⁵ Rochford reported honestly whatever he heard or saw which seemed significant, and in doing so has given a useful eyewitness account of the days of riot. His reports of the uprising and its aftermath were in fact almost his last from Madrid.

He had asked for home leave in January 1766, for reasons of health and in order to attend to pressing private affairs in England. The latter was the stock reason given by every British diplomat in this period for home leave, but on grounds of health Rochford had a legitimate claim. He had suffered an accident in November when his coach overturned near the Escorial, and was "a good deal indisposed" for a month afterwards. His convalescence was in addition saddened by news of the death of his former patron, the Duke of Cumberland, for whom he put his household into mourning on 25 November.⁷⁶

Conway laid this request before George III early in February, but the King was reluctant to release Rochford from his post while the Manila Ransom issue remained unresolved. Rochford nevertheless renewed his request, and Conway, perhaps more sympathetic after his own severe illness in March, pressed the King to grant Rochford his home leave early in April 1766.⁷⁷

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75. Lalaguna, "England, Spain, and the Family Compact, 1763-83," (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1968), p.36, note 1, cites as the most recent account of the 1766 uprising V. Rodriguez Casado, La politica y los politicos en el reinado de Carlos III ; but adds that it is currently being re-examined by Fr. F. Olachea. Henderson, op.cit., (bibliography, pp.738-9) also cites D. Jose Navarro Latorre, Hace Doscientos Anos. Estado Actual de las Problemas del 'Motin de Esquilache', (1966).
76. SP 94/172, f.140, Rochford to Conway, 14 November 1765 ; ibid., f.159, Rochford to Conway, 25 November 1765.
77. SP 94/173, f.91, Conway to Rochford, 11 February 1766 ; ibid., f.195, Conway to Rochford, 11 April 1766.

It was not until 12 May, however, that Rochford had his audiences of leave-taking with the King and Royal Family, and with the Queen Mother. He was greatly pleased at the last of these, as the Queen Mother had seen nobody since the insurrection, not even the Family Ambassadors, yet she readily granted Rochford a "most remarkably gracious" audience at Aranjuez. It was also one of her last ; she died after a long illness on 11 July 1766. ⁷⁸

Rochford's delay in obtaining his audiences of leave may have been caused by the difficulty of settling his debts before leaving Madrid, for which it has been said he had to pawn his plate and jewels for the grand sum of £ 6,000. It is a pity that so little is known of this most interesting episode, suggestive as it is of Rochford's extravagance, and the heavy expenses involved in maintaining an embassy at Madrid. ⁷⁹

Leaving de Visme as Chargé in his absence, as he had done in the previous year for his short leave to Paris, Rochford finally left Madrid on or about 15 May 1766. ⁸⁰ It is not known precisely when he arrived in England, though it may be assumed to have been sometime early in June.

By the time Rochford landed in England, the first sign of the decline of Rockingham's administration had been seen, in the resignation of the Duke of Grafton at the end of April. His successor was Charles Lennox, 3rd Duke of Richmond, then the

78. SP 94/174, f.22, Rochford to Conway, 12 May 1766 ; *ibid.*, f.181, de Visme to Richmond, 14 July 1766.

79. D.N.B., XXI, 1344, citing the Morning Herald for 6 October 1781. F.P. Renaut, "Etudes sur le Pacte de Famille et la politique coloniale française," Revue des Colonies Françaises, X (1922), 235, speaks of "la pénible liquidation de ces dettes à Madrid," but gives no references.

80. SP 94/174, f.22, Rochford to Conway, 12 May 1766 ; Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, 1689-1789, p.136.

British Ambassador at Paris, who had been in England on leave since February. Richmond was appointed Secretary of State for the Southern Department on 23 May 1766, and Conway transferred on the same day to the Northern Department. It was undoubtedly thanks to Conway that Rochford was chosen at the same time as Richmond's successor in the Paris embassy.⁸¹ Rochford arrived home on leave to discover that he had at last realized his first major ambition.

Rochford's appointment as British Ambassador to the French Court was officially announced on 1 July 1766, though his equipage grant and salary (of which he received the customary first three months in advance) both commenced on 29 June.⁸² On 4 July Richmond sent Rochford's Letters of Recall to de Visme for delivery to the Spanish Court, and Rochford sent in the same packet a personal letter informing Grimaldi of his appointment to Paris.⁸³

For his Secretary of Embassy, Rochford unhesitatingly chose his new friend Stanier Porten, the British Consul-General at Madrid. Conway on the other hand knew that the King would have preferred a younger man of good family who might then adopt the Diplomatic Service for his career, and suggested Colonel Robert Murray Keith, son of the former British Minister at Vienna.⁸⁴

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81. Grenville Papers, edited by W.J. Smith (London, 1852-3), III, 237, Whately to Grenville, 23 May 1766. Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, 1689-1789, p.22; J. Steven Watson, The Reign of George III (1960), p.117.
82. D.N.B., XXI, 1344; Collins, The Peerage of England (1779), IV, 144; BM Add MSS 33056, f.243, Allowance Warrant for the Earl of Rochford, 4 July 1766, to commence as from 29 June.
83. SP 94/174, f.112, Richmond to de Visme, 4 July 1766.
84. D.N.B., XXX, 329; Conway at last secured Keith a post as British Minister to Saxony in 1769, whence he transferred to Copenhagen in 1771. See Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, pp.37, 115, 165.

But Rochford was adamant, and Conway could appreciate his insistence ; "I know the thorough disagreement of having any body in such situation that is not quite agreeable." ⁸⁵ Porten was accordingly appointed Secretary of the Paris embassy on 11 July, and Richmond wrote that same day instructing him to repair to Paris with all speed, to take charge until Rochford's arrival. ⁸⁶ Porten reached Paris on 31 August, where the outgoing Secretary, Richmond's brother Lord George Lennox, presented Porten to the French Court at Compiègne and acquainted him with the affairs of the embassy. ⁸⁷

Rochford himself did not arrive in Paris until late in October, having been delayed not only by the preparations for his embassy but also by Lady Rochford's poor health. ⁸⁸ He was therefore a most interested spectator both of the replacement of Rockingham's collapsed ministry by the Chatham administration in July 1766, and of the new ministry's struggle to find someone to replace him at Madrid.

In the week following Rochford's appointment to Paris, the Lord Chancellor, Northington, asked permission to resign as he believed the Rockingham administration too weak to continue, and George III wrote to ask Pitt if he could form a new ministry. The formation of this new administration, and Pitt's elevation to the Lords as the Earl of Chatham, are thoroughly described elsewhere ; ⁸⁹

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85. Conway to Rochford, 10 July 1766, Private ; in the possession of W.S. Lewis, Farmington, Mass., to whom I am indebted for a photostat of this letter.
86. SP 94/174, f.120, Richmond to Porten, 11 July 1766. BM Add MSS 33056, f.251, Treasury Allowance Warrant for Stanier Porten, as Secretary to Lord Rochford's Embassy, from 11 July 1766.
87. SP 78/271, f.1, Porten to Shelburne, 3 September 1766.
88. Conway to Rochford, 10 July 1766, Private ; the Lewis/Walpole Collection, Farmington, Mass., cited in note 85 above.
89. J. Brooke, The Chatham Administration, 1766-1768 (London, 1956), pp. 1-19.

Conway was retained as Northern Secretary, and became the spokesman of the Ministry in the Commons, but Chatham insisted that Richmond must surrender the Seals of the Southern Department to the brilliant though unpopular Earl of Shelburne, who took office on 2 August.⁹⁰ It was with Shelburne that Rochford would therefore correspond from Paris.

But who was to replace Rochford at Madrid? Grenville and his friends in opposition made no secret of their conviction that Rochford was much too useful at Madrid to shift him to Paris just at this time ;

"as he, by knowing exactly the present state of the Court there, and by being an object of attention of the people, may be of more service where he now is [Madrid] than any other man can be."⁹¹

Throughout August and September, the ministers approached a number of likely prospects for the Spanish embassy, including Buckingham, Yorke, Hillsborough, and two casualties of the change of ministry, Grantham and Huntingdon, but all declined the post. The Spanish Ambassador, Masserano, was making almost daily enquiries about the matter, and by October it had become an acute embarrassment to the King and his ministers, until someone suggested Sir James Gray, who had only recently given up his post at Naples. Gray accepted reluctantly, for his health was not good, and it was almost a year before he took up his new post.⁹²

90. Brooke, Chatham Administration, pp.11-12, 16.

91. Grenville Papers, edited by W.J. Smith (London, 1852-3), III, 237, Whately to Grenville, 23 May 1766.

92. Grenville Papers, III, 240; "... the Ministry are at the greatest loss to find a proper person to succeed him" Rochford ; for the progress of the search in October, see Chatham Correspondence, edited by Taylor and Pringle (London, 1838-40), III, 96-106 passim ; see also, Brooke, Chatham Administration, pp.35-37.

Grenville made great capital out of this whole sorry business, and his remarks in Parliament in 1767 not only sum up the situation rather neatly but form in addition a postscript on Rochford's Madrid embassy. Grenville lamented

"That a minister every way agreeable to the Court of Spain had been recalled from that country at a time when it was most of all necessary to have an able person there, from the ticklish state of that Court, and that important negotiation [the Manila Ransom] trusted to the care of a clergyman left there Chargé des affaires [de Visme]; a Chaplain of the Church of England charged with the great and desirable object of breaking the family compact at the court of the Catholic King, whilst the ambassador appointed to go there was waiting in England 'till time could be found to give him his instructions." 93

Gray finally received his instructions in June 1767, and reached Madrid about 15 October. 94

By that time, Rochford was well established at Paris.

93. Grenville Papers, IV, 216-8; also quoted in D.B. Horn, The British Diplomatic Service, 1689-1789 (Oxford, 1961), p.80.

94. Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, 1689-1789, p.136. De Visme left Madrid on 24 November 1767, but continued his diplomatic career as Secretary to Cathcart's embassy to St Petersburg, where he arrived 16 June 1768. D.N.B., XIV, 448-9, and Horn, Representatives, p.117.

CHAPTER 13 : Rochford's Instructions for Paris, his Arrival,
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Rochford's Instructions for Paris,
his Arrival, and Major Inherited Negotiations, 1766-67.

Rochford kissed hands as the King's new Ambassador to France on 29 June 1766, but his departure was delayed for almost two months after this, not only by the preparations necessary for such an important embassy, but also it would appear by ill-health.¹ Towards the end of September, Rochford wrote to Shelburne from his country seat at St Osyth ;

"My Health is a little mended with the Assistance of the Bark, but I have not yet ventured out, as my Strength encreases but slowly. I will however at all events set out for London next Monday, & have the honor of waiting upon Your Lordship the next morning, unless any return of Illness should prevent me."²

Whatever it was, Rochford's illness seems to have returned as he feared, for it was not until mid-October that he came to London for his Instructions and verbal briefing from Shelburne ; his two sets of Instructions, both the routine formal Instructions and the more detailed "Separate and Private", were dated 18 October.³

The routine formal Instructions, covering such matters as the presentation of credentials and the conduct to be observed in

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1. Daily Advertiser, 30 June 1766 ; cited in Walpole Correspondence (Vale, 1937-), XXII, 420, n.5. Rochford's appointment is also noted in the London Magazine (1766), p.380.
 2. Lacaita-Shelburne Papers, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan ; Rochford to Shelburne, 22 September 1766, Private.
 3. SP 78/271, fos.67-71, for the formal Instructions ; *ibid.*, fos.72-84 for the Separate and Private. The new clauses in Rochford's Instructions are also printed in British Diplomatic Instructions, VII, France, Part iv (1745-1789), edited by L.G. Wickham Legg, Camden Society, 3rd series, Volume XLIX (London, 1934), pp.99-100.

audiences with the French King and Royal Family, were virtually identical (*mutatis mutandis*) with those of his predecessors at Paris since 1763, the Earl of Hertford and the Duke of Richmond. Apart from the ceremonial aspects, the most important clauses of these formal Instructions for Rochford were to be the sixth and ninth, which reminded him to uphold Britain's trade relationship with France as defined by the 1713 Commercial Treaty of Utrecht, and to assist all British merchants at French ports.⁴

Even the "Separate and Private" Instructions preserved unchanged many of the clauses already commended to Hertford and Richmond. The first and second clauses reminded Rochford of the vigilance required towards France's obligations under the Peace Treaty of 1763, and her intentions towards the "Tranquility of Europe," whilst warning him to watch constantly France's connexion with the Court of Vienna. The ninth clause added Russia and Prussia as powers with whom France's dealings warranted close attention.

The most important of the "particular Heads of Business" still depending between Britain and France, namely Dunkirk (Clause 12) and the Canada Paper claims (Clause 15), were explained to Rochford in exactly the same terms as they had been to Hertford and Richmond. Two other clauses, relating to the movements of the Young Pretender and the problem of the Newfoundland fisheries, were distinctly dated ; the former made no mention of the death of the Old Pretender at the start of 1766, and the latter took no note of the partial resolution of the Newfoundland question in 1765.⁵

4. For the earlier Instructions to Hertford and Richmond, see British Diplomatic Instructions, VII, France, iv (1745-1789), edited by L.G. Wickham Legg (1934), pp.85-90, 94-95.

5. On the Newfoundland fisheries question, see P. Coquelle, "Le comte de Guerchy, Ambassadeur de France à Londres, 1763-1767," Revue des Etudes Historiques, 74 (1908), pp. 448-455.; and D.D. Irvine, "The Newfoundland Fishery ; a French Objective in the War of American Independence," Canadian Historical Review, XIII (1932), pp.268-284, especially pp. 270-274.

Most of the clauses in Rochford's "Separate and Private" Instructions reflect the anxiety of postwar British Ministers that France would attempt to recover some of her colonial losses in the near future by a swift and sudden 'Revanche' ; this was of course Choiseul's ultimate ambition. Rochford's attention was therefore directed both to the means for such a 'Revanche,' namely the condition of France's armed forces and her financial resources (Clauses 6 and 11), and to the likely theatres of conflict, namely North America (Clauses 13 and 14), the West African coast (Clause 5), and above all the West Indies (Clauses 17 and 18).

Rochford was, as at least one writer has remarked, the first professional diplomat to occupy the British Embassy in Paris after the Seven Years' War.⁶ The value placed upon his experience as Ambassador in Spain by the British Ministers is suggested by two important new clauses in his Instructions for Paris.

The first new feature of Rochford's "Separate and Private" Instructions was the emphasis placed by the third clause upon France's relationship with Spain under the Family Compact. This was described as "a Connection of the most intimate & Extraordinary Nature," and Rochford was instructed to "leave no possible Means untried to penetrate into the Nature and Tendency of this Connection as well as the Instruments and Means" by which it was supported. In addition to discovering wherever possible the "secret Resolutions" of the French and Spanish Courts, Rochford was also to be alert to "all Transactions between them, particularly to any Cessions which may have been publicly or secretly made or are proposed to be made by one to the other in the West Indies, South America,

6. British Diplomatic Instructions, VII, France, iv (1745-1789). edited by L.G. Wickham Legg (London, 1934), p.98.

or elsewhere." To this end, Rochford was given the usual directive to keep up a regular correspondence with the British Ambassador at Madrid (Clauses 7 and 8), but in addition he was also given a new and specific directive regarding Spain at the end of this important third clause ; "you are to make the State of that Kingdom in every Respect a chief & principal Object of your Enquiries."

The second new feature of Rochford's "Separate and Private" Instructions for Paris was perhaps in part a reflection of one of the major themes of his work both at Turin and Madrid, namely his attention to commercial matters. An entirely new fourth clause noted with concern the "late Increase of the French Trade in several different Branches," which was "so great as to merit most exceedingly the Attention of Great Britain." Rochford was therefore to apply his utmost diligence to the discovery of its present state, and any schemes or regulations for its future improvement, "particularly the State of their Woollen and other Manufactures," and to procure exact information regarding the extent and management of France's lucrative West Indian sugar trade.

Rochford's Instructions did not, however, extend to each and every minor particular of business still depending between the two Courts ; for example, no mention was made of the English East India Company's claim for the maintenance of French prisoners of war in India, nor of such minor cases as that of the ship Jove. These would presumably have been discussed by Shelburne in his verbal briefing while reading through the Instructions with Rochford, in which he also apparently laid great stress on the question of Dunkirk. ⁷

7. Shelburne Papers, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan ; Volume 23, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 November 1766.

In addition to this briefing from Shelburne, Rochford had hoped to benefit from the advice of Chatham himself, but the King's Chief Minister was nursing his gout in the country, and though flattered by Rochford's request, would not think of giving Rochford the trouble of travelling so far when Shelburne had already instructed him so capably at London. Chatham declared the new clauses of Rochford's Instructions "very proper," and could think of nothing else to add or amend. ⁸

Nor was Chatham the only elder statesman whom Rochford hoped to visit before leaving for Paris. Rochford's avoidance of any irrevocable entanglement in the world of political faction has already been noted earlier ; he seems to have adopted as his rule the maxim of personal loyalty to the Crown which most of his contemporaries regarded merely as a convention, to which one paid lip-service when required but did not allow to cramp one's style in day to day political manoeuvres. Rochford's personal friends were drawn from several of the major factions rather than any single one ; Sandwich, Rigby, and Neville were numbered amongst the Bedfordites, Albemarle and Conway were then of Rockingham's friends, and Chatham's protégés Grafton and Shelburne were among his acquaintance. But Rochford did not regard Chatham as his father-figure in the way that Grafton did ; Rochford's political mentor after the death of Cumberland was none other than the grand old wire-puller himself, the Duke of Newcastle. ⁹

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8. Chatham Correspondence, edited by Taylor and Pringle (London, 1838-1840), III, 115 ; Chatham to Shelburne, 5 November 1766.
 9. BM Add MSS 33070, f.46, Rochford to Newcastle, 20 June 1766 ; "I believe I need not tell Your Grace how much obliged to you I am for your freindly hint, it is a mark of Kindness I shall never forget, your Grace knows how well our political Principles agree, & I wish most sincerely on every Publick as well as private account to merit the continuance of your freindship . ." See also Namier, England in the Age of the American Revolution (2nd edition, 1961), and Brooke, The Chatham Administration (1956), passim, for the political alignments at this time.

Rochford wrote to Newcastle on 22 October, expressing appreciation for the Duke's goodness to him on so many previous occasions, and lamenting that his illness had prevented him from visiting Newcastle in the country that summer : was there, however, any chance of their meeting in London before Rochford's departure for Paris, and failing that, was there any service Rochford could perform in France for his old friend ? ¹⁰

Newcastle replied at once, regretting that he would not be in town for some weeks yet, and would therefore be denied the pleasure of personally wishing Rochford all the best for his new embassy. Newcastle proceeded to convey these best wishes in writing, in suitably fulsome and dignified terms ;

"I rejoice Extremely, for the Sake of the King, & the Publick, that Your Lordship is employed in a High Station of such Consequence to Both ; and cannot but hope that your Situation will be as agreeable to you, as It is useful to your Country . ."

Conventional sentiments, undoubtedly, but Rochford surely found pleasure in their flattery, issuing from such an eminent oracle. As for Rochford's being of service at Paris, Newcastle confessed that he was almost "entirely unknown" to the present French ministers, but that Rochford might convey his regards to his old friend the Marquis de Puisieulx, and if possible on the way, to remember him to "my Honest Old Friend La Bouillie, Intendant at Calais," assuring the latter that his "Commission about the Snuff" was being attended to. ¹¹

10. BM Add MSS 33070, f.413, Rochford to Newcastle, 22 October 1766.

11. BM Add MSS 33070, f.417, Newcastle to Rochford, 23 October 1766.

Rochford must have left London shortly after writing to Newcastle, for the Duke's reply did not catch him, and was sent on to Paris ; Rochford was therefore unaware of his duty to call upon the Intendant of Calais. ¹² It is possible that they in fact met, however, for it was customary that a major embassy be greeted by the local dignitaries, and Rochford certainly travelled by way of Calais. His reasons for avoiding Dunkirk were explained by Shelburne in a letter to Chatham ;

"The Duke of Richmond made Dunkirk his road. Lord Rochford begs not to do this, as he says it was the first thing that disgusted not only the Court but the People of France against the Duke of Richmond ; but that he will be very ready to go some time hence from Paris to examine the State of it." ¹³

The Rochfords arrived at Paris in the afternoon of 28 October 1766, where they were greeted by Rochford's Secretary of Embassy, Stanier Porten. In his opinion, Rochford and Lucy were "in good Health tho' a little fatigued with the Journey." Porten had had ample time to prepare for Rochford's arrival, having been in Paris since the end of August, and in charge of the Embassy since Richmond's Secretary (his brother, Lord George Henry Lennox) had taken his audience of leave on 4 October. ¹⁴ After settling in at the house in the Faubourg St Germain, Rochford next morning sent word by his private secretary to notify the Duc de Choiseul of his arrival and to request an audience for the presentation of his credentials. ¹⁵

12. BM Add MSS 33071, f.51, Rochford to Newcastle, Paris 20 November 1766.

13. Chatham Correspondence, III, 113-4 ; Shelburne to Chatham, 18 October 1766. Rochford first knew of Richmond's visit to Dunkirk from Conway's letter of 8 November 1765 (SP 94/172, f.75, Separate).

14. Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, 1689-1789, p.23.

15. SP 78/271, f.100, Porten to Shelburne, 29 October 1766. Rochford's private secretary at Paris was one William Henry Higden ; see SP 78/272, f.74, Rochford to Shelburne, 4 February 1767.

Two days passed before Choiseul replied, in which time Rochford gathered from other members of the diplomatic corps (the Spanish and Sardinian Ambassadors each made him a private visit) that he was unlikely to have his audience for some time, as the Court was at Choisy and the King was not expected back at Versailles for several weeks. But on 1 November, Rochford received "a most polite Letter," in Choiseul's own handwriting, notifying that the King wished to receive Rochford without delay, and would be at Versailles the very next day to receive him. Rochford remarked upon this ;

"The giving me an audience so soon, and the [French King's] coming from Choisy to Versailles . . . is looked upon by all the Ambassadors here as a great Mark of Distinction."

He also thought this a promising sign that Louis XV desired at least cordial relations with Britain. ¹⁶

On the morning of 2 November, therefore, Rochford drove in his ambassadorial coach and six to Versailles, where he delivered a copy of his credential letter to Choiseul. The Minister then withdrew to join the Royal party, while Rochford was conducted to the Salle des Ambassadeurs. Here he was greeted by the Introduceur, M. de la Live, who without delay showed Rochford into the audience chamber.

After the usual obeisances, Rochford delivered "a little speech in French," expressing his own Sovereign's personal regard for the French Crown, and declaring Britain's desire for continued peace and harmony with her close neighbour. In reply, Louis XV assured Rochford that he fully reciprocated these sentiments, and

16. SP 78/271, f.114, Rochford to Shelburne, 2 November 1766.

shared his brother monarch's concern for the peace of Europe. The French King then added the conventional compliment that in sending Rochford as Ambassador, George III had "made choice of a Person extremely agreeable to him." In relating this part of the audience, Rochford hastened to add, "It is not Vanity that prompts me to mention this Circumstance . . . but I think it my Duty not to omit mentioning any Attention shewn." In this he was perfectly correct, for even the slightest coolness in the elaborate ritual of exchanging compliments could indicate a change of attitude between Courts. But it is possible that Rochford had sensed more than the usual politeness of the compliment, for Louis XV must surely have been glad to see as British Ambassador a career diplomat, experienced, polished, and fluent in French, after the arrogance and ineptitude of Hertford and Richmond.¹⁷

Rochford remained with the King for another half-hour after the completion of the formal exchanges ; "His Most Christian Majesty talked to me all the time, and in the most gracious Manner." Rochford was then conducted to the Queen's apartments, where he made another brief formal speech in accordance with his Instructions, and thence to the remainder of the Royal Family, the Dauphin and Dauphiness, the Princesses, and the late Dauphin's children, all of whom made "the most polite Returns" to Rochford's formal compliments. Rochford afterwards dined with Choiseul, and the two men sat late into the night in Choiseul's study, discussing many points of business.¹⁸

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17. SP 78/271, f.114, Rochford to Shelburne, 2 November 1766. See also for comments on Hertford, Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence, 1763-1765, edited by F. Spencer (1961), p.191.
 18. SP 78/271, f.114, Rochford to Shelburne, 2 November 1766. Rochford's report of this first interview is in Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 November 1766 ; the matters discussed will be examined in turn below.

This very full day at least completed all of Rochford's formal audiences at Court ; Lady Rochford was not presented at Versailles until 2 December, a month later, when she was received in "a most remarkable distinguished Manner." ¹⁹ In the meantime, however, Rochford had many more ceremonial visits to perform. On 3 November he notified in form the other foreign ambassadors and ministers of his arrival and reception by the French King, and soon began exchanging visits with them. He also notified the leading members of the French Court and members of the King's Council of State, and began making formal visits to many of them. By the middle of November, there only remained the visits on the Princes of the Blood, but here Rochford encountered an awkward problem. ²⁰

The Princes of the Blood claimed that newly arrived ambassadors, in making their visits, should offer them the same formal compliment in their Sovereign's name as had been made to the French King and Royal Family. Rochford found the other foreign ministers "scandalized at this Pretension" ; the Neapolitan Ambassador had been in France for fourteen years and still had not visited the Princes of the Blood for this very reason. The Spanish and Austrian Ambassadors likewise refused to make their visits under such terms.

Rochford's own predecessors at Paris had however submitted and made their visits without any difficulty, except that Richmond had deliberately omitted any compliment in his Sovereign's name, which "gave great offence." Upon studying his formal Instructions,

19. SP 78/271, f.147, Rochford to Shelburne, 4 December 1766.

20. SP 78/271, f.114, and 132, Rochford to Shelburne, 2 and 12 November 1766.

Rochford agreed that Richmond's action was strictly in accordance with his instructions, but yet could not support what seemed to him a grave tactical error in needlessly giving offence where it might have been avoided. Rather than decide such a delicate matter by himself, Rochford appealed to Shelburne for guidance.

While waiting for a reply from London, Rochford nevertheless sought some unofficial means of resolving the difficulty. He had a good friend who was a "principal Personage" in the household of the Prince de Conti, through whom Rochford discovered that the Prince wanted to meet him and regretted not being on better terms with the other ambassadors. It was therefore arranged that Rochford should meet the Prince as if by chance, in the hope of finding some solution to "this trifling Business." The meeting took place a few days later at the house of the Comtesse de Boufflers, but Rochford was dismayed to find that even after a discussion lasting two hours, the Prince saw no need to alter his "high Tone," and refused to accept any of Rochford's suggested compromises. Their conversation was, however, most amicable and they parted on the best of terms.

Rochford also mentioned the affair to Choiseul, knowing that he was no great friend to the Princes of the Blood, and was gratified to hear him declare that the Princes had no grounds for such a pretension, and that they ought to have accepted Rochford's suggestions for a solution. The Sardinian Ambassador, on hearing Rochford's news, postponed his intended visit, and declared that he would wait to see what directions Rochford received from London, then follow his example. Rochford was delighted by this ; "for in all Affairs of this Kind, Ambassadors should unite." ²¹

21. SP 78/271, f.132, Rochford to Shelburne, 12 November 1766, Separate ; Rochford had sent his card to the Comtesse de Boufflers by 5 November; see Lettres de Mme du Deffand à Horace Walpole, edited by P. Toynbee (London, 1912), I, 159 ; Deffand to Walpole, 5 November 1766.

Shelburne, however, lamely left the matter to Rochford's own discretion, adding a flattering tribute to the skill he had always shown in such delicate affairs. Having failed to bring the Prince de Conti to consider a compromise, Rochford apparently felt he had done enough, and merely gave out that he would wait his turn until all the other ambassadors who had arrived before him had made their visits on the Princes of the Blood. Secure in the knowledge that the other ambassadors would not yield, Rochford thus let the matter rest without giving offence. ²²

He was not quite finished with matters of etiquette, however, and this time it was Shelburne who asked for Rochford's advice. George III had received a letter from the Duc de Penthièvre notifying the death of his mother, the Comtesse de Toulouse, and it was not known whether an answer from the King himself was in order. A search of the correspondence had failed to reveal any notification of the Legitimation of the Illegitimate Princes in 1714, which would have made a reply in form necessary. On enquiry, Rochford found that all the Courts of Europe which wrote to the Princes of the Blood wrote equally to the Illegitimate Princes as well ; the Court of Vienna was the exception, and wrote to neither. Choiseul told Rochford that George II had twice written to the Duc de Penthièvre, and offered to show him the originals. From all this, it was decided that a reply was in order, and Rochford later delivered it by means of his secretary. ²³

As for the Princes of the Blood, far from profiting by their intransigent stance, their attitude provoked retaliation from

22. SP 78/271, f.143, Shelburne to Rochford, 28 November 1766 ; SP 78/272, f.43, Rochford to Shelburne, 22 January 1767.

23. SP 78/272, f.99, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 February 1767 ; *ibid.*, fos.51 and 109, Shelburne to Rochford, 30 January and 27 February 1767.

the diplomatic corps ; the Spanish Ambassador, Fuentes, somehow procured a ruling that ambassadors were henceforth entitled to wear their swords and to enter unmasked at the Bal d'Opera, privileges hitherto jealously guarded by the Princes of the Blood alone. ²⁴

Rochford's first impressions of the diplomatic corps at Paris were that most of the foreign ministers were little more than Choiseul's lackeys. Souza, the Portuguese Ambassador, who might normally have been thought of as the ally of the British Ambassador, was notorious as a news-gatherer for Choiseul. Baron Gleichen, the Danish Envoy, was likewise "quite a Creature of the Duke of Choiseul." Rochford strongly disapproved of such proclivity ;

" . . if he is trusted by his own Court he is far from being a proper minister at this, as I am quite satisfied he conceals from the Duc de Choiseul nothing that he is informed of."

The Swedish Ambassador, Count Gustav Filip Creutz, was no stranger to Rochford ; "as I knew him intimately at Madrid I keep up my Connection with him." But from all appearances, he remained in Rochford's opinion "a most determined Frenchman." Rochford was unwilling to relate gossip about the members of the diplomatic corps, and reserved his considered judgment for a later report, as he explained to Shelburne ;

"Characters are Things of so delicate a Nature, that I will never trouble Your Lordship with any of my Observations 'till I am morally sure that they are well-founded." ²⁵

24. SP 78/272, f.43, Rochford to Shelburne, 22 January 1767.

25. Shelburne Papers, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan ; Volume 23, f.91, Rochford to Shelburne, 24 December 1766, Secret (not in SP).

Rochford's impression of Creutz seems nevertheless to have been accurate enough, and received confirmation from a reliable source. The British Envoy at Stockholm, Sir John Goodricke, writing to Rochford early in 1767, noted that Rochford's estimation of Creutz "agrees perfectly well not only with his Character, but with that of Count Fersen and other leaders of the French Party here." 26

After the isolation of Madrid and the long delays attending the correspondence between Spain and England, Rochford was no doubt glad to be so much nearer home, where he could expect an urgent dispatch to be answered in a matter of days rather than weeks. Porten had of course taken charge of the secret ciphers when he took over from Richmond's Secretary, Lennox, but Rochford rightly mistrusted the French postal services and preferred to use reliable messengers at all times. The French deciphering service was renowned throughout Europe, though it is ironical that some of Choiseul's correspondence with the French Embassy in London had been entrusted to the mail and accordingly deciphered by the Post Office before this time. 27

Rochford's method was to send a messenger to Calais to meet the Saturday packet for Dover, handing the sealed package of dispatches to the English captain. Rochford's messenger then waited at Calais for the return packet on Sunday night which brought the mail from London. In this way, Rochford pointed out, Shelburne

26. The W.S. Lewis / Walpole Library, Farmington, Conn.; autograph letter, Goodricke to Rochford, 27 February 1767.

27. SP 78/271, f.3, Shelburne to Lennox, 12 September 1766 ; *ibid.*; f.31, Porten to Shelburne, 28 September 1766. See also, J.W.Thompson and S.K. Padover, Secret Diplomacy (London, 1937), pp.244-265, and K.L. Ellis, "British Communications and Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, XXXI (1958), pp.159-167, on interceptions and ciphers at this time.

would have regular weekly reports, and his replies would reach Paris in time for Rochford's Tuesday conference with Choiseul ;
 "and the Danger of a Cypher will be avoided." 28

This useful arrangement, which saved using the already overburdened King's Messengers and freed them for longer journeys, took a little while to become established at the London end. Barely a fortnight after its inception, Rochford sent Shelburne a terse reminder that the clerks in his office must take care to address his letters to the Agent for the Packets at Dover, with instructions for them to be sent over separately by the Captain of the Packet and delivered to Rochford's servant at Calais. Unless this was done, " after all our Precautions," they would be taken on to Paris with the common post. 29

Rochford displayed similar resourcefulness in establishing his sources of intelligence at Paris, and within a short time seems to have made some useful contacts in French government circles. But such services, though fairly readily available, were much more expensive in Paris than they had been at Madrid. Early in December, Rochford wrote privately to Shelburne ;

"I have made a Connection here with Persons from whom I flatter myself I shall receive some useful Intelligence," but Shelburne must know better than most that the obtaining of information, especially copies of secret papers, cost a great deal ;
 " . . and I believe I need not acquaint Your Lordship that my private Purse will not allow me to defray expenses of that kind."

Would the King allow Rochford a certain sum for this purpose ? 30

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- 28. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 November 1766.
 - 29. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.57, Rochford to Shelburne, 20 November 1766.
 - 30. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.79, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 December 1766, Private.

Shelburne replied some six weeks later that the King was willing to allow such sums as Rochford thought adequate to obtain useful information, though where the amount might be very large, the request should first be referred to London. Other than this, Rochford might continue to obtain information as and when he could, making an occasional bill for his expenses and specifying the particulars. ³¹

Rochford was somewhat embarrassed by this last point ; it was not quite as simple a matter as purchasing a newspaper. In order to obtain any information at all, he had to favour his informants with regular small sums, and encourage them with the expectation of larger sums if their information proved valuable ;

" . . it is necessary to be connected with inferior Persons of Office here, who have opportunities of giving essential Intelligence, and . . such Connections are not kept up without paying for them."

A tone of injured dignity pervades the remainder of Rochford's letter. He was sure his contacts were good ones, and worth cultivating, but if the King disapproved of such dealings he would never again mention the matter. Unspoken was the implication that such methods could not be avoided in eighteenth century diplomacy, and that it was folly to neglect them when one's rivals and neighbours used them. Rochford was allowed his bill, sans détails. ³²

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31. SP 78/272, f.40, Shelburne to Rochford, 23 January 1767, Most Secret.
32. SP 78/272, f.172, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 March 1767, Private ; *ibid.*, f.202, Shelburne to Rochford, 3 April 1767, Secret. For a further discussion of secret service money, see Horn, British Diplomatic Service, pp.259-283, and A. Cobban, Ambassadors and Secret Agents (London, 1954), pp.110-120.

Just as Rochford had learned at Madrid the value of reliable intelligence sources, so too he had learned much earlier at Turin that diplomatic emoluments tended barely to cover one's overall expenses, let alone provide for the purchase of information. Though his salary at Paris was now the largest of any in the whole British diplomatic service, Rochford still relied heavily on his salary, and may have begrudged meeting secret service needs from what he saw as the just reward of long service abroad. ³³

There was a steep price to be paid for enjoying the premier post of the service, for Paris was notoriously one of the most expensive capitals of Europe, and household costs for an ambassador of the first rank were enormous, from the high cost of provisions and luxuries to the lavish scale of constant entertainments. It is a fair assumption that Rochford spent as much time and energy in social commitments as he ever did in actual business, for as Chesterfield observed, much of the real business of diplomacy was achieved in the private exchange of information. ³⁴

Yet business there was, and in abundance, on Rochford's arrival in Paris. He had hoped to avoid at first "any business that might occasion the least altercation," until he had had time to settle into his new post ; but this was a vain hope, for Choiseul immediately plunged him into the deepest of business on the very day of his first audiences at Versailles. ³⁵

33. Journal of the House of Commons, XXXII, 581, 589 (Civil List payments), gives £ 7,795 as Rochford's emolument and allowances from October 1766 to October 1767.

34. Chesterfield's Letters, edited by J. Bradshaw (London, 1892), I, 155 ; see also Horn, British Diplomatic Service, pp.61-69, and J. LaVerne Anderson, "The British Embassy in Paris, 1714-1763," History Today, XXI (1971), pp.49-56.

35. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 November 1766 (not in SP).

Their after-dinner discussion in Choiseul's study began with the problem of Dunkirk, that "constant sore" in Anglo-French relations throughout most of the eighteenth century,³⁶ and ranged over such outstanding issues between the two Courts as the Canada Bills, the English East India Company claim for maintenance of French prisoners of war in India, two cases relating to English vessels seized by the French in the West Indies, and above all, Britain's disputes with Spain, over non-payment of the Manila Ransom and Britain's presence on the Falkland Islands. These last two issues involving Spain were the most pressing, and Choiseul made an important proposal to Rochford at this first interview which initiated a major negotiation in itself. Rochford's share in this, the first Falkland Islands crisis of 1766, deserves close examination in view of his role as Secretary of State in the later, more serious, Falklands crisis of 1770, and will be considered in the next chapter. The remainder of the present chapter attempts to trace his handling of those major inherited negotiations regarding Dunkirk, the Canada Bills, and the East India Company claim, which Choiseul revived at this first interview on 2 November 1766.

The Treaty of Paris of 1763 confirmed the provisions of earlier treaties regarding Dunkirk, notably those of Utrecht (1713) and Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), which had called for the dismantling of the defences and port so as to prevent its use as a naval base. In each intervening war, the defences had been repaired, and in the most recent conflict an additional work had been completed, namely the notorious cunette, which carried the outflow of all the local

36. British Diplomatic Instructions, 1689-1789, VII, France, iv (1745-1789), edited by L.G. Wickham Legg (1934), p.xix.

canals along the fosse of the old town, to issue at the lower end of the harbour where its scouring action was more effective in keeping the channel to the sea between the jettées deep enough for large vessels. Article Thirteen of the Peace of Paris stipulated the immediate destruction of the cunette, along with the coastal forts and batteries. However, the French plenipotentiaries had succeeded in securing a final clause that means were to be found for the preservation of the salubrity of the air and the health of the inhabitants once the cunette was destroyed, for the canals emptying at Dunkirk drained a large low-lying district which was prone to flooding in winter and pestilence in summer. ³⁷

Engineers were appointed by both sides to superintend the demolition works which proceeded steadily throughout 1764. The forts and batteries were dismantled, the King's Bason was demolished and partly filled in, and the cunette completely filled in. Drainage of the 'country waters' was secured by reopening the sluice of the Canal of Bergues at the very head of the harbour. ³⁸ The British Engineer, a renegade Frenchman named Desmaretz, insisted that the demolition would not be effective without the destruction of the jettées protecting the channel to the sea, but Choiseul protested that this would obstruct the drainage of the district and contravene

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37. Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France . . . XXV-2, Angleterre, iii (1698-1791), edited by P. Vaucher (Paris, 1965), pp. 565-6 ; for the text of Article 13, see Z.E. Rashed, The Peace of Paris, 1763 (Liverpool, 1951), p. 221. There is no full account in English of the problem of Dunkirk as it affected Anglo-French relations in the eighteenth century, though materials for such a study exist in abundance ; earlier works in French are listed in L. Lemaire, Bibliographie de l'histoire de Dunkerque (1929).
38. For maps showing features of the town and harbour of Dunkirk at this time, and the system of canals in the district, see Appendix C and Appendix D below.

the treaty provision regarding the salubrity of the air. Desmaretz in turn accused the French of failing to open the sluice gates at the proper times, so as to give an impression of poor drainage. The British Government decided to insist upon the demolition of the jettées, and did so by the simple expedient of substituting this word in place of "cunette" in the relevant clause of the Instructions given to Richmond in 1765. ³⁹

Plainly, Choiseul intended to use the clause regarding the health of the inhabitants as a pretext for evading the full demolition of Dunkirk as a port. His main concern was to prevent as far as possible the complete silting up of the channel, for while forts and batteries could be repaired quickly, it would take much longer to clear a badly silted entrance and build new jettées. However, British insistence resulted in two small experimental breaches being made in the jettées in September 1765, and when these produced no marked deterioration in the channel, a third and larger coupure was made. This larger cut soon created sandbanks, and made the channel so sinuous that even small trading vessels began to run aground. Choiseul at once ordered the work to be stopped, despite British protests, and as the silting increased during 1766, he instructed Guerchy to protest at London against the danger of flooding in the low-lying hinterland. ⁴⁰

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39. British Diplomatic Instructions, VII, France, iv (1745-1789), compare pp.88 and 95. This change has been strangely overlooked by recent writers, who assume that the disputes over Dunkirk continued to refer to the cunette ; see Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence, 1763-65, edited by F. Spencer (1961), p.191, and N. Roberts, Splendid Isolation, 1763-1780 (Reading, 1970), p.17.
40. Vaucher, Recueil des Instructions . . . XXV-2, Angleterre, iii (1698-1791), pp.419-420 ; New Letters of David Hume, edited by Klibansky and Mossner (Oxford, 1954), I, 110-111, 118-119, 125-127, from SP 78/267-8 ; P. Coquelle, "Le Comte de Guerchy," Revue des Etudes Historiques, 74 (1908), pp.456-460.

It was this protest which Choiseul repeated to Rochford at their first interview on 2 November, yet at the same time, Rochford noted, Choiseul "took a great deal of Pains" to convince him that they intended to fulfil their treaty obligations regarding Dunkirk, and even went so far as to offer not to repair these demolitions in the event of another war. Rochford merely replied that they would have to wait until the engineers reported on the drainage situation. Rochford was inclined to be sceptical of Choiseul's assurances ; "I will not take upon me to answer for any man's Sincerity, nor am I apt to be too credulous" ; yet he thought Choiseul seemed anxious to avoid a quarrel over Dunkirk. ⁴¹

The engineers' report early in December concluded that the silting of the channel in no way impeded the drainage of the district and was unlikely to do so while the bed of the channel remained lower than the sill of the sluice gates on the Canal of Bergues. ⁴² Informing Rochford of this, Shelburne pointed out that it was really up to the French to find a remedy for the salubrity of the air, since the obvious solution suggested by Britain, the reopening of the Sluice of Mardyke, had been rejected as too expensive. As for Choiseul's offer not to repair the demolitions in time of war, Shelburne scornfully remarked that if it was difficult in peacetime to bring France to fulfil her treaty obligations, it would be quite impossible in time of war! ⁴³

But when Rochford informed Choiseul of the engineers' report, and repeated Britain's insistence on the full execution of the treaty requirements for Dunkirk, he met with a very hostile

41. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 November 1766 (not in SP) ; SP 78/271, f.93, Shelburne to Rochford, 25 October 1766.

42. SP 78/271, fos.126 and 149, Desmaretz and Frazer to Shelburne, 10 November and 5 December 1766, enclosing plans and profiles.

43. SP 78/271, f.156, Shelburne to Rochford, 19 December 1766.

response ; "I have never yet seen him so warm as he was upon this Occasion." Choiseul resented the imputation that France would have to find her own remedy for the drainage of the district, as it was never understood at the peace negotiations that the demolitions at Dunkirk should go so far as to put a whole province under water and dispossess 50,000 people! Since Britain now regarded their compliance with the strict letter of the treaty as a test of their sincerity for peace, France would likewise regard Britain's acquiescing over the provision for the health of the inhabitants of Dunkirk as a test of her desire to preserve the peace. Rochford was unmoved by this heated and exaggerated diatribe, and merely repeated firmly that he was instructed to insist on the execution of Article 13 "in its full Extent." But he was nonetheless a little uneasy at Choiseul's vehemence, and gloomily anticipated that unless some alternative method was agreed upon for preserving the salubrity of the air at Dunkirk, he foresaw in the near future "that this Business will meet with great Difficulties."⁴⁴

Yet for the next few months, nothing more was said to him by Choiseul on the subject of Dunkirk. In March, Desmaretz reported to Shelburne (sending duplicates to Rochford at Paris) that there was still no noticeable obstruction to the drainage of the 'country waters.'⁴⁵ But after heavy rains in the following month, there was undeniable flooding in the low-lying district of the Moere. This was usual after heavy rain in the winter, but Choiseul seized the opportunity to renew his protests against the

44. SP 78/272, f.3, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 January 1767.

45. SP 78/272, f.178, Desmaretz to Shelburne, 20 March 1767.

effect of the cuts in the jettées, and complained that the environs of Dunkirk suffered greatly from flooding as a result. Guerchy made the same complaint at London, but suggested that a fresh examination of the whole question might wait until the pressure of Parliamentary business had eased.⁴⁶

However, the British engineers at Dunkirk again reported that the silting up of the channel had in no way affected the salubrity of the air or prevented the drainage of the district. Desmaretz went even further, and reminded Shelburne that the treaties would not be fulfilled until the jettées were entirely levelled, and the channel thus closed to larger vessels.⁴⁷ Choiseul on the contrary hinted to Rochford that if the flooding behind the town grew worse, he might be compelled for the sake of the populace to order the repair of the three coupures made in 1765.⁴⁸

Rochford regarded this hint to repair the jettées as little short of a threat, or as he termed it, a "menace", and Choiseul was careful at their next interview to qualify his earlier statement, explaining that he saw this as an emergency measure in a very wet season. Porten was with Rochford at this interview, and agreed afterwards that Choiseul had, in contrast to his previous outburst, spoken "with great Coolness and Moderation." After dinner that evening, Choiseul drew Rochford aside into a corner, and resumed his discourse on Dunkirk.

⁴⁶. SP 78/272, f.267, Rochford to Shelburne, 14 May 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.295, Shelburne to Rochford, 26 May 1767.

⁴⁷. SP 78/272, f.303, Desmaretz to Shelburne, 30 May 1767 ; a copy of this report, and a covering letter, Desmaretz to Rochford, 3 June 1767, are now in the Rochford Papers at the W.S. Lewis / Walpole Library, Farmington, Conn.

⁴⁸. SP 78/272, f.267, Rochford to Shelburne, 14 May 1767 ; SP 78/273, f.22, Rochford to Shelburne, 2 July 1767, Secret.

Choiseul assured Rochford, as he had at their very first interview, that they were resolved to fulfil their engagements regarding Dunkirk, provided the salubrity of the air was secured and floods prevented, and said he wished there should not remain the least appearance of a difference between the two Courts. He therefore suggested that when Rochford took his intended leave in England, he should travel by way of Dunkirk, and see for himself the situation there. ⁴⁹

Shelburne agreed that this was a "very judicious and fair" suggestion, and readily granted Rochford permission to make this visit, trusting that he would then be better able to convince Choiseul that Britain pressed the matter, not "cut of Pique," but simply for "the fair Execution of the Treaty." ⁵⁰

At the end of July, therefore, Rochford and Choiseul together reviewed the both sides of the Dunkirk question, with maps and plans before them which were examined "very minutely." With this "most interesting Conversation" having made perfectly clear to Rochford the French point of view, he set out from Paris for Dunkirk on 3 August, proceeding from there to London. ⁵¹

There is no direct evidence of the discussions Rochford undoubtedly had with Shelburne at this time on Dunkirk and many other matters of note relating to France, but it is surely no mere coincidence that on 14 August, Shelburne sent for Desmaretz'

49. SP 78/273, f.22, Rochford to Shelburne, 2 July 1767, Secret.

50. SP 78/273, f.24, Shelburne to Rochford, 7 July 1767.

51. SP 78/273, f.43, Rochford to Shelburne, 23 July 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.49, Rochford to Shelburne, 30 July 1767. Desmaretz and Frazer made a very detailed report even as Rochford set out from Paris to visit them ; SP 78/273, f.53, "Observations on the present Situation of the Works of Dunkirk," 4 August 1767, which largely affirmed their earlier opinion that the interior flooding could not be attributed to the silting of the channel beside the cuts in the jettées.

assistant, Andrew Frazer, to come to London "without Delay," to confer on the situation at Dunkirk.⁵² The only other indication of these talks is a list of copies from earlier correspondence about Dunkirk, delivered to Rochford on the eve of his return to Paris, on 17 September.⁵³ Altogether, Rochford felt himself "amply instructed" regarding Dunkirk when he next spoke to Choiseul on the subject early in October.

After reminding Choiseul that the treaty provisions relating to Dunkirk remained very far from being fulfilled, Rochford pointed out that instead of complying with Britain's just demand, they had even hinted at repairing the start which had been made in demolishing the jettées, which was in fact no less than a "Menace." At this, Choiseul "broke out with some Violence, and interrupted . . . saying, 'et Nous le ferons' " ; but as Rochford went on, and exposed as false the charges that the cuts in the jettées had caused flooding in the region, as he had been on the spot to see for himself, Choiseul "grew calm and reasoned with great Moderation."

He at first dwelt, "as usual", on their determination to maintain the peace, and said he could not imagine how it could appear that they meant to quibble over Dunkirk ; if they seriously meant to dispute it, they would have proceeded in a different way! He then repeated what Rochford recognized as "All the Old Arguments he formerly made use of," but went on to add a new argument that Britain should rest satisfied with what had been done at Dunkirk. This was that no mention of the jettées

52. SP 78/273, f.63, Shelburne to Desmaretz and Frazer, 4 August 1767.

53. SP 78/273, f.94, "List of papers delivered to Lord Rochford, 17 September 1767 ; copies extend from f.96 to f.128 ; they date mostly from 1714, and chiefly concern the question of flooding in the districts behind Dunkirk.

had been made when Britain first protested against the construction of the cunette, so that these were then clearly not an object for redress, yet Britain had a better right to demand the demolition of the Canal of Bergues, which had been repaired during the last war after an earlier demolition under the treaties of Utrecht and Aix-la-Chapelle. The drainage of the district, and thus the health of its inhabitants, now depended on the outlet of that canal. To repair the Sluice of Mardyke would employ eight or ten thousand men and cost thirty millions ; "It would be better going again to war," Choiseul quipped, though Rochford was relieved to notice that it was said "in good humour."

Rochford conceded that the Canal of Bergues had been allowed to remain for the salubrity of the air, but reminded Choiseul that while the jettées remained, its flow kept the channel deep enough for large vessels, which was certainly not the intention of the treaties. He dwelt "very strongly" on the impropriety of Choiseul's threat to repair the cuts already made in the jettées, and reminded Choiseul that until the jettées were entirely demolished, the treaties remained unfulfilled. Rochford then fulfilled his own instructions from Shelburne, and made a formal demand for the full execution of the Treaty of Paris as it related to Dunkirk. He made this demand in general terms only, as Shelburne had advised him not to add any particulars.

After a long silence, Choiseul at last agreed that the cuts in the jettées must remain, and gave Rochford his promise that they would take no step to repair them. He added that since Britain did not regard the treaties as being fulfilled, she was entitled to keep her engineers on the spot. Rochford chose not to

press Choiseul any further for the full demolition of the jettées, as he judged that Choiseul would not concede this point, and knew that if he bullied him any further he would run the risk of provoking a more serious quarrel. Rochford merely warned Choiseul that this answer would not satisfy, and that he might expect further orders to insist on full compliance with the treaties. Rochford left it to Shelburne and the Cabinet to decide how far it was desirable to push Choiseul at this time. At least, the "menace" of repairing the cuts in the jettées was now "taken off" ; it was not much, but even a small concession from a minister of Choiseul's reputation was no mean success. ⁵⁴

Shelburne replied a fortnight later after discussing Rochford's report with Cabinet. The King especially approved of his ambassador's discretion in not pressing Choiseul too far, since it was decided that any further demand relating to Dunkirk was better deferred until after the winter. In the meantime, Rochford was to adhere strictly to his present position if Choiseul raised the matter again. Desmaretz and Frazer were likewise instructed to ensure that the sluice gates at Dunkirk were opened regularly between tides to carry off the 'country waters', and to prevent any letting in of the sea water to give an appearance of flooding, as had been done at Mardyke. ⁵⁵

But in fact, no further demand was to be made in the remainder of Rochford's Paris embassy. Neither Choiseul nor Shelburne made any mention of Dunkirk to Rochford, and even in

54. SP 78/273, f.152, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 October 1767, Secret.

55. SP 78/273, f.176, Shelburne to Rochford, 23 October 1767, Secret.

July and August 1768, when Frazer reported routine dredging of the main canals near Dunkirk, Shelburne did not even remark on these proceedings to Rochford.⁵⁶ Certainly the British Ministry at that time was anxious to avoid the least quarrel with France, as became very obvious during the year with the French acquisition of Corsica, but perhaps Choiseul also held back a little over Dunkirk, having found in Rochford a wary opponent, less easily bullied or hoodwinked than other members of the diplomatic corps.⁵⁷ For the meantime, the question of Dunkirk lay dormant and unresolved, only to trouble Rochford anew as Secretary of State in the 1770s.

An important inherited negotiation which Rochford's Paris embassy did, however, largely resolve was that concerning the so-called Canada Bills or Canada Paper. When Canada became British as a result of the Seven Years' War, many former French subjects were left holding various forms of wartime paper money issued by the French administration for the payments of troops, workmen, and merchants. Though these assorted billets d'ordonnance, certificates, and forms of card and paper money had suffered considerable inflation in the closing stages of the war, they were eagerly bought up by British speculators from Canadians returning to France, in the expectation of a generous liquidation by the French government. This question was not mentioned in the Treaty of Paris itself, but an appended declaration promised to honour such bills held by British subjects, whether Canadians or not, so long as these sums

56. SP 78/275, f.134, Desmaretz and Frazer to Shelburne, 8 July 1768; *ibid.*, f.215, Frazer to Shelburne, 30 August 1768, in which Frazer reports his colleague's failing health. Desmaretz may have died not long after, for the Dunkirk correspondence is thereafter (and in the 1770s) managed by Frazer alone.

57. For Rochford's comments on the diplomatic corps at Paris, see below, p.477, from SP 78/272, f.256, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 May 1767.

were not confused with the reimbursement made to holders who had remained French subjects. The French government then moved with unusual speed, and issued a series of arrêts in the course of 1764, calling for the registration of all Canada bills, and their swift liquidation at a considerable discount from their face value. Letters of exchange were reduced by 50 %, and all other forms of card and paper money by 75 %. A very short period was allowed for registration, and any claims left unrecognized at its expiry were to be declared forever excluded. ⁵⁸

These arrêts fell hardest on British proprietors of Canada bills, as most could not possibly furnish proofs of their ownership in the short time specified. A group of leading London merchants formed a Committee before the end of 1764 to represent the interests of the British proprietors of Canada Bills, and this Committee pressed their government to open negotiations with the French to reconsider their manifestly unfair proceeding. But the attempts of Halifax and Conway to induce the French to negotiate met with stubborn resistance in Paris throughout 1765. It was not until March 1766 that agreement was reached on a fresh Convention for the liquidation of bills held by British proprietors. This was signed in London by Guerchy and Conway on 22 April 1766. ⁵⁹

This Convention upheld the enormous discounts of the original arrêts, but proposed in compensation a lump sum of three million livres, part in coin, part in promissory notes, which would

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58. There is a useful summary of the early stages of the case in SP 78/271, f.12, Shelburne to Porten, 23 September 1766 ; see also the more detailed account in Coquelle, "Le comte de Guerchy," Revue des Etudes Historiques, 74(1908), pp.441-8.
59. SP 78/271, f.12, Shelburne to Porten, 23 September 1766 ; Coquelle, pp.442-5 ; Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France . . . XXV-2, Angleterre, iii (1698-1791), edited by P. Vaucher (Paris, 1965), p.422 ; for the failure to start talks in 1765, see the correspondence from SP 78/267-8 printed in full in New Letters of David Hume, edited by R. Klibansky & E.C. Mossner (Oxford, 1954), xxiii-xxiv, 93-129, passim (August-November 1765).

be secured either as reconnaissances or Rent Contracts, to be divided in "just proportions" amongst those who could establish their claims. This Convention also stipulated a terminal date, 1 October 1766, by which British holders were to have registered their claims for scrutiny by the French office of liquidation. The proofs were to be supported by a solemn oath, which carried stern penalties for forgeries and false witness. ⁶⁰

The examination of British claims to Canada Bills proceeded throughout the middle part of 1766, but it proved to be a slow process, and worse than that, the French Commissioners rejected the greater part of the British claims, amounting in all to some two million livres. This was largely because few holders had been able to gather their proofs of ownership quickly enough, especially where affidavits had to be sought in Canada and elsewhere. The original holders were now widely scattered, and many of the British-held bills had been obtained from French Canadians who had not declared them for the first Register and had therefore been rejected at the office of liquidation for French proprietors in 1764. ⁶¹

At the outset of Rochford's Paris embassy, therefore, the British government had two vital objectives to secure with regard to the Canada Bills question ; firstly, to have the deadline for registration extended beyond 1 October, and secondly to arrange an alternative method of examining claims, preferably by a joint commission of both French and British deputies.

60. The Convention is printed in C. Jenkinson, A Collection of all the Treaties . . . between Great Britain and other Powers (London, 1785), III, 202-8.

61. SP 78/271, f.5, Shelburne to Porten, 19 September 1766 ; *ibid.*, f. 12, Shelburne to Porten, 23 September 1766.

Rochford's Secretary of Embassy, Stanier Porten, who came to Paris at the end of August to prepare for Rochford's arrival, was fully instructed regarding the Canada Bills, and did his utmost to persuade Choiseul to extend the 1 October deadline. But Choiseul maintained that the matter was not strictly his to decide, and said that Guerchy would doubtless be instructed on the answer he should give on his return to London. ⁶²

When Shelburne broached the matter to Guerchy in October, the French Ambassador "peremptorily declined" to agree to any extension, claiming that the Convention was perfectly sufficient on this point, and adding that the sums claimed by British holders seemed to amount to more than was ever issued. A second interview failed to budge Guerchy from his refusal. ⁶³

Rochford first spoke to Choiseul about the Canada Bills on 4 November. He found Choiseul at first as unwilling to discuss the matter as he had been with Porten, protesting that it was an intricate affair, outside his domain, and he thought Guerchy was handling it all in London. Rochford then proceeded to explain the position of many British proprietors, whose claims took a long while to establish because the witnesses were so widely scattered. He laboured long to persuade Choiseul of the justice of extending the original closing date, and after "a good deal of conversation," was successful ; Choiseul agreed to write to Guerchy next post, to recommend an extension. ⁶⁴

62. SP 78/271, fos.5 and 12, Shelburne to Porten, 19 and 23 September 1766 ; *ibid.*, fos.33, 39, 45, Porten to Shelburne, 1, 5, 7 October, 1766.

63. SP 78/271, fos.93 and 108, Shelburne to Rochford, 25 October and 7 November 1766.

64. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 November 1766.

Upon receipt of Choiseul's letter, Guerchy at once gave way and agreed to extend the closing date. This meant in addition that British claims rejected by M. Lescalier the French commissioner for what Shelburne termed "frivolous reasons" would now be re-examined.⁶⁵ Before this, Rochford had appointed Porten as his Deputy for certifying the oaths of British holders who had yet to present their claims at the office of liquidation in Paris.⁶⁶

Beginning on 24 December, Porten attended each day at M. Sartine's office, and received the oaths of a number of British claimants. Early in January 1767, the final list of registered claimants was submitted to Sartine, who sent all the papers across to Guerchy, to be handed to the joint commission in London, which then granted a general Certificate authorizing the liquidation of these claims in Paris.⁶⁷

It was an involved and tedious business, which Rochford and Porten had hoped would be swiftly and smoothly resolved. But towards the end of January, Shelburne received an indignant protest from the London Committee of British proprietors of Canada Bills, that large sums of British-held Bills had again been rejected at the office of liquidation in Paris without any reason being given, and furthermore that a duty of four sols per livre had been retained on those admitted for liquidation, which British subjects ought not to have to pay.⁶⁸

65. SP 78/271, f.136, Shelburne to Rochford, 18 November 1766.

66. SP 78/271, f.120, Porten to Shelburne, 5 November 1766.

67. SP 78/271, f.206, Porten to Shelburne, 31 December 1766 ; SP 78/272, fos.10 and 34, Porten to Shelburne, 7 and 14 January 1767.

68. SP 78/272, f.19, Rochford to Shelburne, 13 January 1767 ; *ibid.*, f. 55, Macleane to Porten, 30 January 1767.

A further difficulty then arose over the form of the oath to be administered to the latest batch of British claimants yet to be examined in Paris. Shelburne had authorized a few minor changes designed to remove certain ambiguities, and thus to prevent any later disputes, but the new French commissioner at Paris, M. de Marolles, protested to Porten that he could not administer the oath in any other form than that given in the Convention of 1766, without fresh instructions to that effect from his Court. ⁶⁹

Fortunately, Shelburne's explanation that his new oath was strictly in accord with the intentions of that agreement carried some weight with Guerchy, who recommended his Court to accept it. In the course of February, Porten observed a gradual change in Marolles' attitude, and at the start of March, he was at last directed by Praslin to accept the new oath. On 5 March, Porten and Marolles settled down to the task of examining each of the new claims in turn. ⁷⁰

Porten took no step without consulting Rochford for his approval and guidance, but Rochford had suggested that it would be helpful if Porten were given the same powers of commission as his French counterpart, and well before the examination of claims began, Rochford was given authority to grant such additional powers to his Secretary of Embassy. ⁷¹ Rochford also suggested that Porten should sooner or later spend a few days in London, conferring with Shelburne and the Committee of Proprietors, so that he could exercise his powers of discretion with greater certainty ; both

69. SP 78/272, f.61, Porten to Shelburne, 28 January 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.79, Porten to Shelburne, 4 February 1767.

70. SP 78/272, fos.105, 117, 143, Porten to Shelburne, 18 and 25 February and 4 March 1767.

71. SP 78/272, f.61, Porten to Shelburne, 28 January 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.68, Shelburne to Porten, 3 February 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.91, Rochford to Shelburne, 12 February 1767, Secret.

Rochford and Porten were anxiously aware of their responsibility towards the many small-holders represented by the larger merchants. But Porten chose to defer this leave until after the confirmatory Edicts had been published, lest his absence gave rise to further delay or misunderstanding. ⁷²

The examination of claims proceeded throughout March and April 1767, with Porten sending regular reports to London relating details of those claims passed or rejected. Apart from the inevitable crop of blatant forgeries (Porten remarked that these were easily spotted, being usually very crudely done), few were entirely rejected, though some claimants representing groups of small-holders found parts of their claim accepted and others rejected for various reasons. Porten's lists of certificates gave detailed explanations in each of these instances. Some delay was encountered in waiting for replies to enquiries made in French coastal towns such as Bordeaux and La Rochelle, so that another arrêt was necessary early in April to extend the deadline yet again, but by the end of that month, Porten's work at Paris was completed and the sixth and last statement of certificates was signed. ⁷³

The definitive arrêt authorizing liquidation of those claims passed by the joint commission was expected within a few days, but as there seemed so little likelihood of further problems arising, Porten decided to take his home leave without delay, and

72. SP 78/272, fos.79, 87, 105, Porten to Shelburne, 4, 8, 18 February 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.85, Shelburne to Porten, 13 February 1767.

73. SP 78/272, fos.158, 174, 180, 188, Porten to Shelburne, 11, 18, 22 and 25 March 1767 ; *ibid.*, fos.206, 215, 227, and 245, Porten to Shelburne, 1, 8, 22, and 29 April 1767.

he left Paris about 8 May. No record appears to have survived of his discussions with Shelburne and the London Committee of Canada Bill Proprietors, but at his return to Paris late in June, Shelburne wrote to Rochford in glowing terms of Porten's zeal and "useful knowledge" ; Rochford had made an excellent choice for his Secretary of Embassy, and Porten was to give further evidence of his ability in the remainder of 1767. ⁷⁴

To all intents and purposes, the affair of the Canada Bills had been settled at last to the satisfaction of both Courts. It was understood that any late claims which could be established as bona fide would probably be accepted for liquidation as a mark of favour by the French Court, though not as of right. One such case, concerning the hospital of a religious order in Quebec, was admitted among the later certificates signed by Porten even though it had missed the earlier registration. But not all of the late claims were as straightforward as this, and those of Messers Vialars and Rybot were to give Rochford problems later in the year. For the meantime, however, the greater part of the whole transaction seemed to have been settled, and only awaited the publication of a definitive arrêt. ⁷⁵

But the expected arrêt had still not been published when Porten arrived back in Paris on 28 June, and it was not in fact until November that the order was published ; the Paris Parlement registered the document on 4 December 1767. There immediately went up a howl of protest from the Committee of British holders of

74. SP 78/272, f.256, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 May 1767, Secret ; *ibid.*, f.320, Shelburne to Rochford, 24 June 1767.

75. SP 78/272, f.68, Shelburne to Porten, 3 February 1767 ; *ibid.*, f. 206, Porten to Shelburne, 1 April 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.219, Shelburne to Rochford, 14 April 1767.

Canada Bills, that the method of liquidation adopted infringed the 1766 Convention. The Committee's earlier protest regarding rejected claims and the feared duty of four sols per livre on accepted claims had been answered as long ago as February ; then Marolles had explained to Porten that the claims rejected without explanation were the more obvious forgeries, and that the rumoured duty was not only in deniers and not sols at all (amounting to about $1\frac{1}{2}$ %), but applied only to claims by French subjects. ⁷⁶

The Committee's protest at the definitive arrêt of November 1767 was considerably more serious than this earlier complaint, and required detailed explanation. The arrêt merely stated that the reconnaissances issued for the liquidation of Canada Bills were to be converted into perpetual Rent Contracts. The ways in which this change would be prejudicial to British holders of Canada Bills were set out in a paper drafted by the agent to be sent by the London Committee to confer with Rochford in Paris, M. Guinand, who was himself a proprietor.

Guinand made four main points of protest ; firstly, that English law prohibited British subjects from taking any part in French funds, and whereas the Bills had been the legal property of British subjects under the protection of their government, the new Rent Contracts would not be made under that protection ; secondly, holders were likely to suffer a reduction in the amount of interest allowed by the original agreement, which was $4\frac{1}{2}$ % ; thirdly, Rent Contracts would be much harder to sell than reconnaissances ; and fourthly, they would be liable to all sorts of domestic duties. ⁷⁷

76. SP 78/273, f.280, Shelburne to Rochford, 22 December 1767 ; SP 78/272, f.37, Porten to Shelburne, 8 February 1767.

77. SP 78/273, f.281, for Guinand's paper ; SP 78/274, f.4, Rochford to Shelburne, 6 January 1768, Separate.

Upon receiving Guinand's paper, Rochford conferred with various bankers and holders of Canada Bills then in Paris, and early in January 1768 answered each of his main points in turn. In the first place, the Rent Contracts were to bear the same number in the French funds as the original reconnaissances, and the Contracts would specifically state that they stemmed from reconnaissances of Canada Bills which were the legal property of British subjects. In effect, it was merely a change of form, and the Contracts would remain as much under British protection as the reconnaissances. On the second point, Rochford noted that the arrêt solemnly guaranteed the same rate of interest. The third point was, however, a justifiable complaint ; Rent Contracts were undeniably more difficult to sell or dispose of. Yet the French Court might argue that as the new regulation caused no loss to the proprietors and gave no advantage to the French Government, there was no real ground for complaint. Rochford was inclined to agree, pointing out that the Rent Contracts were not to be made before the end of 1768, allowing ample time for any who wished to sell their reconnaissances at a good price. As for the last point about duties, Rochford could make no comment since it was not made clear what duties Guinand had in mind. He concluded with the observation that if the French Court attempted any further changes prejudicial to British holders, he could still make ministerial representations in protest ; but "untill such Innovations may be introduced, any Complaint must appear premature." 78

This masterly reply took much of the wind from the sails of the London Committee of British Proprietors of Canada Bills, but they were determined to proceed with Guinand's visit to Paris.

78. SP 78/274, f.4, Rochford to Shelburne, 6 January 1768, Separate.

Quite apart from the intended conversion of reconnaissances into Rent Contracts, there were two outstanding cases which were strongly supported by the Committee ; that of M. Vialars, whose proofs of ownership had been deficient, but who felt that his claim had been rejected primarily because of a personal quarrel in London with Guerchy, and that of Mr Rybot whose whole claim had been rejected because it was an impenetrable tangle of genuine small claims and clever forgeries. Both men represented numbers of honest small-holders, but their own claims were rather dubious examples of speculation. ⁷⁹

Shelburne was well aware of the personal interest of the larger claimants, and he warned Rochford that the speculators (of whom Guinand was one) had a vested interest in receiving payment of their Canada Bills in a mode that would give greatest value when sold again, and that they benefitted from the rejection of smaller individual claims, for this increased the proportion of the compensatory Bonus remaining to the larger claimants. ⁸⁰

Guinand's departure for Paris was delayed until late in April by the Committee's own close scrutiny of the individual claims sponsored by Vialars and Rybot, and their rejection of any which gave the least evidence of fraud. Rochford conferred several times with Guinand upon his arrival in Paris, and pointed out that it would be preferable to secure a re-examination of these cases by deputies, as Porten had examined the earlier claims, rather than simply submit a Memorial on their behalf, which would

79. SP 78/274, f.50, Rochford to Shelburne, 13 January 1768 ; on Vialars see SP 78/271, f.161, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 December 1766 ; SP 78/272, fos.1 and 19, Shelburne to Rochford, 2 January 1767, and Rochford to Shelburne, 13 January 1767 ; also, P. Coquelle, "Le comte de Guerchy," Revue des Etudes Historiques, 74 (1908), p.444.

80. SP 78/274, f.154, Shelburne to Rochford, 19 April 1768.

only produce an evasive answer, "and Memorials and Answers might be carried on forever." The biggest obstacle was in obtaining Choiseul's consent for a re-examination of claims which had been rejected before. When Rochford broached the matter with Choiseul towards the end of April 1768, he was not at all hopeful of success, and had great difficulty even in getting Choiseul to discuss the Canada Bills again ;

" . . but I knew it would be a great Point gained to bring the Duke of Choiseul to approve of the remaining claims being examined, and this I had the good luck to succeed in."

Choiseul finally agreed to have another deputy appointed to confer with Porten as before, and even went so far as to concede that Vialars' claim ought to be allowed for the sake of the many small-holders whom he represented. Rochford submitted the necessary Memorial that same day. ⁸¹

Within a few weeks, Porten had notice from one M. Vilevault, his opposite number as French deputy, that they should begin their examination of the remaining claims. Before the end of May, it had been decided that all the small claims lodged before 1 October 1766 for which Vialars acted on commission ought to be passed for liquidation, but that his own claims seemed less certain and would require further investigation. As for Rybot's claim, Porten thought the proofs against him were very strong, and it was up to Shelburne to decide whether they should continue to support it. ⁸²

81. SP 78/274, f.214, Rochford to Shelburne, 28 April 1768 ; there is a copy of Rochford's Memorial in Nassau Papers, E/30, Rochford to Choiseul, 28 April 1768.

82. SP 78/275, fos.19, 30, and 41, Porten to Shelburne, 11, 18, and 25 May 1768 ; *ibid.*, f.77, Rochford to Shelburne, 9 June 1768.

Porten returned to London on leave on 6 June, and did not in fact return to Paris before the close of Rochford's Paris embassy in September ; it may have been on Porten's advice that Shelburne took no further steps on behalf of Vialars and Rybot, for nothing more is heard of them in the remainder of Rochford's correspondence from Paris.⁸³ Yet as in the case of Dunkirk, merely ignoring a problem did not always cause it to go away ; the Committee of British Proprietors of Canada Bills remained to pester Rochford again as Secretary of State in the 1770s.

The affairs of Dunkirk and the Carada Bills were by far the largest of the negotiations Rochford inherited along with the Paris embassy, but they were not the only important issues between the two Courts ; equally important was the claim of the English East India Company for their wartime expenses in maintaining French prisoners of war in India.

This claim was kept quite separate from the main settlement of prisoner of war maintenance between France and Britain, which was finally agreed upon after much haggling at the end of 1764.⁸⁴ As the troops engaged in the Indian theatre of the Seven Years' War had been paid and maintained by the respective East India Companies, it was intended that the two claims should as far as possible be balanced, so that each Company was reimbursed by its own counterpart. This involved the preparation of detailed accounts, which

83. SP 78/275, f.77, Rochford to Shelburne, 9 June 1768 ; *ibid.*, f.84, Shelburne to Rochford, 18 June 1768, Secret ; a detailed report by Guinand of 7 July (SP 78/275, f.127) seems to have evoked no official response.

84. The sum agreed upon was £ 667,000, to be paid over a period of three to four years ; for the negotiations of 1764, see Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence, 1763-65, edited by F. Spencer (1961), pp.173-214, *passim*.

were then to be scrutinized by the other Company, before a final figure was agreed upon. The accounts prepared by the English East India Company had long since been sent over to Paris, but nothing more had been heard of them for many months, and Rochford's first task when reviving the matter with Choiseul was to ask what had become of them. Choiseul frankly admitted that the accounts had been received, but that Praslin had "forgot what he had done with them" ! Rochford reminded Choiseul that this was no trifling matter, that large sums were involved, and a part of the peace treaty remained to be fulfilled. Choiseul was visibly embarrassed, and promised to investigate the matter, though he was sure the accounts had been passed to their own East India Company. ⁸⁵

Rochford reminded Choiseul of this in the following week, on 11 November 1766, and pointed out that a duplicate of the demand would have been given to either Guerchy or Durand in London. On enquiry, Choiseul found this was so, but the demand was really only a general covering letter for the accounts, and did not specify in any detail the actual sums required. He assured Rochford that they had "no Intentions to make any Difficulty" in paying the demand, but the accounts were truly lost, and could not be found in the offices of either the French East India Company or the Minister responsible, namely Praslin. Much as it was to be regretted, another set of accounts would have to be prepared. ⁸⁶

85. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 November 1766 (not in SP).

86. SP 78/271, f.129, Rochford to Shelburne, 12 November 1766 ; SP 78/272, f.49, Rochford to Shelburne, 22 January 1767, Separate ; Choiseul here read Rochford part of Guerchy's reply of 13 January 1767, which said he was tired of saying the accounts had been mislaid whenever questioned about them by Shelburne.

The Directors of the English East India Company acted swiftly to begin preparing a second set of accounts, but the copying took some time ; Shelburne remarked to Rochford that they were "pretty voluminous."⁸⁷ Shelburne finally sent them over to Rochford on 20 February, and the delay which then elapsed before they were presented to Choiseul was entirely Rochford's own ; he was determined to deliver them into the Minister's hands personally, but Choiseul was absent from Court for the early part of March. It was not until 24 March that Rochford took his first opportunity to deliver them.⁸⁸

Again, nothing was said about the claim in the weeks which followed, and as the weeks drew into months, Rochford became a little uneasy. At the start of July 1767, he reminded Choiseul that the English East India Company had yet to receive a reply to their demand for the maintenance of prisoners of war, but Choiseul said that the accounts were still being examined by the French East India Company, and would probably take some time more. He took care not to interfere in their deliberations, which gave an obvious hint to Rochford not to pester him until they had finished their examination of the accounts.⁸⁹

Rochford therefore said no more on the subject, and many more months went by without comment by Choiseul. Finally, Shelburne himself grew impatient, after questions had been asked in the House of Lords, and in February 1768 he instructed Rochford to renew the demand. Choiseul again showed the greatest readiness to

87. SP 78/272, f.53, Shelburne to Rochford, 30 January 1767.

88. SP 78/272, f.93, Shelburne to Rochford, 20 February 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.184, Rochford to Shelburne, 25 March 1767.

89. SP 78/273, f.20, Rochford to Shelburne, 2 July 1767.

oblige, and assured Rochford that he did not expect any problem over payment, as he knew that the French East India Company could well afford to pay. But as nothing had yet been heard from them, he assumed that they were still checking the accounts. ⁹⁰

Shelburne thought this a most evasive and unsatisfactory answer, and told the new French Ambassador in London that the delay was both extraordinary and inexcusable. Rochford again pressed Choiseul to hasten payment, and at the start of August 1768 he submitted another formal Demand. This at last moved Choiseul to mention the matter in Council, with the result that he was ordered by Louis XV to settle it at once. ⁹¹

Having made this final and successful contribution to a long-depending legacy of the Seven Years' War, Rochford left Paris on leave at the end of that month, and was not to return. He was fortunate to have seen two of his three major inherited negotiations resolved within the term of his embassy. But we must now return to the start of that embassy, to consider an even more important negotiation which was much less capable of resolution, and which involved Rochford in the most serious misunderstanding of his entire diplomatic career.

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90. SP 78/274, f.52, Shelburne to Rochford, 12 February 1768 ; *ibid.*, f.65, Rochford to Shelburne, 25 February 1768.
91. SP 78/275, f.171, Shelburne to Rochford, 29 July 1768 ; *ibid.*, f.182, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 August 1768.

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The Manila Ransom and
the first Falkland Islands Crisis, 1766.

The greater part of Rochford's after-dinner discussion with Choiseul on 2 November concerned Britain's current disputes with Spain. The Manila Ransom demand, which had taken up so much of Rochford's time and energy at Madrid, remained unfulfilled and unresolved. Far from there being any improvement on the position Rochford had won, the British demand had been reduced, which only encouraged Spain to insist all the more on her suggestion of an independent arbitration.

Added to this, Spain was now protesting against Britain's presence on the Falkland Islands, which she claimed were close enough to South America to count as part of the Spanish colonial empire. Rochford noted that Choiseul regarded these two issues very seriously, as the most important and potentially dangerous then afoot among the powers of Western Europe. The Falkland Islands question in particular he described as "an Affair of a very delicate Nature." Just how delicate it had become by November 1766 requires some preliminary explanation.¹

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1. The standard authority in English is J.L. Goebel, The Struggle for the Falkland Islands ; a study in legal and diplomatic history (New Haven, 1927), based largely on French and Spanish archives, and still unsurpassed on the legal aspects. The most recent account of the crisis of 1766 is found in J.E. Martin-Allanic, Bougainville, navigateur, et les découvertes de son temps (Paris, 1954), which follows the French sources in considerable detail. I was unable to make use of two standard Spanish accounts ; M. Hidalgo Nieto, La cuestión de las Malvinas, contribución al estudio de las relaciones hispano-inglesas en el siglo XVIII (Madrid, 1947), and O. Gil Munilla, Las Malvinas ; el conflicto anglo-español de 1770 (Seville, 1947). The brief account in J.F. Ramsey, Anglo-French Relations, 1763-1770 (Berkeley, 1939), is useful but not without minor error (p.177, for example, names the British Ambassador in Paris in 1766 as Hertford instead of Rochford).

The small group of barren windswept islands in the South Atlantic now known as the Falkland Islands were so named after being visited and surveyed by a British expedition in 1690. This was the latest in a long succession of visits by explorers of various nations throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, none of which had led to any permanent settlement, and the eighteenth century dawned with the islands still uninhabited. In the first few decades of the century, however, they were visited more frequently by French vessels which used the islands as a shelter and watering place, and proved especially popular with the sailors of St Malo, who named the group *les Isles Malouines*. Still no settlement was made, but British interest revived after Anson's circumnavigation of 1739-1740 had revealed the need for a secure base in the South Atlantic. Anson recommended the Falklands, and by 1749 the Admiralty had decided to mount an expedition to establish an outpost there.

These plans drew indignant protests from Spain. Though the Spanish had made no attempt to survey or settle these islands, they were claimed as part of the Spanish American Empire, access to which was denied the ships of other nations by the Treaty of Utrecht (1713). The British Government stoutly maintained the right to navigate in southern waters and to send scientific expeditions to unexplored parts, but rather than cause a dispute so soon after the conclusion of peace, the project was in 1750 simply dropped.²

Increasing friction in the following decade and the brief Anglo-Spanish War of 1762 made the British Government less inclined to bow before the pretensions of Spanish imperialism, and in 1764

2. Goebel, The Struggle for the Falkland Islands (hereafter cited as Goebel), pp.1-45, 135-169, 194-202 ; Ramsey, Anglo-French Relations (hereafter cited as Ramsey), pp.169-170.

the idea was revived of an exploratory expedition, which sailed in June that year under the command of Commodore John Byron. This expedition made a rather sketchy survey and 'took possession' in the name of George III in fact only of the western island, and returned to England in June 1765 without establishing any permanent settlement. ³

In the meantime, and quite unknown to Commodore Byron, a French expedition from St Malo led by Antoine Louis de Bougainville had actually established a settlement on the eastern island in January 1764. It was named Port St Louis, and stood at the head of what is now Berkeley Sound, where it was not visible from the open sea. In April 1764, Bougainville also 'took possession' in the name of Louis XV, before returning to France for more colonists and equipment. ⁴

Thus the position at the start of 1765 was that Britain had surveyed one of the islands but left no settlement, while France had actually colonized the other main island. In terms of the Law of Nations as it was then understood, Britain's claim by virtue of discovery was insufficient. So too was Spain's theoretical claim under the Treaty of Utrecht, since it could not be proven that these islands were part of the Spanish Empire in the time of Charles II of Spain. In legal terminology, the islands were res nullius, and open to the first permanent occupant, which was now France. ⁵

Much confusion and uncertainty remained as to the precise location of the islands in question, and their proximity to South

3. Goebel, pp.230-233 ; Ramsey, p.170.

4. Martin-Allanic, Bougainville (hereafter cited as Martin-Allanic), I, 70-163 ; Goebel, pp.225-7. See also on Bougainville, J. Dunmore, French Explorers in the Pacific (Oxford, 1965), I, 58-64.

5. Goebel, pp.52-117, 223.

America. When Bougainville made his public announcement in Europe in August 1764 of the discovery and settlement of an island in the South Atlantic, it was assumed by the British Government to be an entirely different group from the Falklands, but the news stimulated the Admiralty to consolidate possession of the Falklands all the same.

Accordingly, in August 1765, a small expedition set sail under Captain John McBride of H.M.S. Jason, which arrived at the Falklands in January 1766. McBride proceeded to erect a blockhouse and other buildings at a suitable harbour on the western island, and he named the settlement Port Egmont after the First Lord of the Admiralty. McBride also surveyed the island more closely, and even sailed around the eastern island, but he did not enter Berkeley Sound and saw no sign of any other occupant. ⁶

Bougainville's public announcement had not at first elicited any stronger complaint than a few mild warnings from Spain, but by the middle of 1765, when it was plain that the French Ministry supported Bougainville's colonizing enterprise, Spanish protests gathered strength and vehemence. In September, Fuentes told Choiseul that the Malouines were out of bounds to all other nations by virtue of the Treaty of Utrecht, and demanded cession or immediate evacuation. Choiseul was reluctant to yield, but rather than cause a rift in the Family Compact it was agreed that France would cede the colony to Spain as soon as Bougainville had been compensated for his investment and efforts by the Spanish Crown. Bougainville went to Madrid in 1766 to negotiate the terms of compensation, towards the close of Rochford's embassy there, and in May a settlement was concluded. ⁷

6. Goebel, pp.238-9 ; Ramsey overlooks this expedition.

7. SP 94/174, f.27, de Visme to Conway, 19 May 1766 ; Martin-Allanic, I, 164-294, 306-308, 358-379 ; Ramsey, pp.170-171.

Bougainville's negotiation at Madrid had finally made the British Government realise that the Malouines and the Falklands were in fact the same group of islands, and in March 1766 a warning was sent by the Admiralty to McBride that there was in all probability a French settlement elsewhere in the islands. This news reached Port Egmont in November. McBride then mounted yet another survey, in which on 4 December 1766 he discovered Port St Louis, where he informed the startled but unimpressed French colonists that they had no business being on British territory and had better leave as soon as possible! McBride then set sail for England, yet by the time he reached Portsmouth, Bougainville had sailed on what was to be a voyage of circumnavigation, the first task of which was the formal cession of the Malouines to Spain. The act of cession took place on 1 April 1767, when Port St Louis became Puerto de la Soledad, and the island group was renamed the Malvinas. ⁸

The diplomatic crisis known variously as the first Falkland Islands Crisis, or the Manila-Malouines Crisis of 1766, was sparked off by British preparations to send reinforcements to the islands after it was publicly known that France had agreed to cede her settlement there to Spain. The crisis was marked by a large degree of French intervention, to soften the tone of Spanish protests in an attempt to avoid war. Choiseul's major contribution was the proposal to link the question of the Manila Ransom with the Falklands dispute, hoping to resolve both problems at once. Rochford's role was to receive and support this plan, but it was not accepted by the British Ministry, and the crisis ended early in 1767 without

8. Goebel, pp.239-240 ; Ramsey, pp.170-171 ; Martin-Allanic, I, 403-404, 420-451, 456-548.

any of the basic issues being resolved. Britain adhered firmly to her claims, and Spain chose not to press her objections to the point of an open confrontation, for fear of war. But the confrontation became inescapable in 1770 when the Spanish Governor of Buenos Aires, acting on general instructions not to tolerate any interlopers on the South American coast, forcibly expelled the British from Port Egmont. The second and major Falkland Islands Crisis of 1770-71 was to be one of the most important episodes of Rochford's career as Secretary of State, but this fascinating affair lies beyond the scope of this thesis, whose present task is to examine Rochford's role in the earlier crisis of 1766. ⁹

In May and June 1766, after receiving de Visme's report on the successful conclusion of Bougainville's negotiation at Madrid, the British cabinet discussed the question of reinforcing the outpost at Port Egmont. It was decided to send a small squadron under Captain Wallace of H.M.S. Dolphin, but the preparation of this expedition was repeatedly delayed and its destination kept secret, largely from nervousness and uncertainty at the risk of offending both France and Spain at once. However, the French chargé in London, Durand, obtained details of the project from an Admiralty clerk for a bribe of £ 75, which left little doubt in Choiseul's mind as to Britain's intentions. He replied to Durand that Britain clearly intended by this expedition to assert her mastery of the seas, and

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9. The account which follows is of necessity based upon the secondary sources cited earlier for the French and Spanish side of the crisis, since circumstances prevented me from examining these archives in person. Nevertheless, it may be found that my account is of some interest for the British side of the negotiations, which has not hitherto been examined in detail. The reason for this is that the vital correspondence between Shelburne and Rochford is largely missing from SP 78 ; these letters are in the Shelburne Papers at the Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and are here used for the first time. Ramsey, p.172, notes this gap in SP 78, and shows great uncertainty as a result. It is curious that previous writers have overlooked these letters ; they were clearly calendared in the Historical Manuscripts Commission, 3rd Report (1872), p.135.

her claim to these islands by discovery, regardless of Spanish counter-claims under the Treaty of Utrecht. In July 1766, Prince Masserano, the Spanish Ambassador at London, expressed his concern over the reported British settlement on the Malouines to both Conway and Richmond, who replied with assurances of peaceful intentions while defending, as Choiseul had predicted, Britain's right to navigate where she pleased and her claim to the Falklands by right of prior discovery. ¹⁰

Early in August, Masserano requested some 'clarification' of the British presence on the islands, though he stopped short of making any formal demand or protest. Shelburne was evasive, and refused to admit that the British outpost was in the same group as the French colony which had been agreed to be ceded to Spain. He argued rather that Utrecht imposed no limitations on Britain's right to navigate and make discoveries in the South Seas. Masserano was outraged at this, and recommended the destruction of the settlement without delay, so as to present Britain with a fait accompli. ¹¹

Fortunately these violent counsels were not taken up at Madrid, and Choiseul urged Durand to restrain Masserano from any rash threats. In September, therefore, Durand added his voice to Masserano's warnings, and pointed out to Shelburne that Spain's claim had been demonstrated by France's readiness to cede her colony, but Shelburne merely retorted that Spain had bought the island, and no question of prior right was involved in that transaction. ¹²

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10. Goebel, pp.240-242 ; Martin-Allanic, I, 306-334 ; P. Coquelle, "Le comte de Guerchy," Revue des Etudes Historiques, 74 (1908), p.461.
 11. Archivo General de Simancas, Inglaterra, legajo 6961, Masserano to Grimaldi, 11 August 1766, cited in Abarca, "Bourbon 'revanche' against England," (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Notre Dame, 1965), pp.387-8. See also Goebel, pp.244-6, and Martin-Allanic, I, 331-352.
 12. AECP, Angleterre, 471, f.182, Durand to Choiseul, 25 September 1766, cited in Martin-Allanic, I, 444-5 ; Goebel, pp.246-7. P. Coquelle, "Le comte de Guerchy," Revue des Etudes Historiques, 74 (1908), 464, citing AECP Angleterre, 471, f.186, Durand to Choiseul, 26 September 1766.

Choiseul summed up the situation in a letter of 2 October to the Spanish minister, Grimaldi. Already there were signs that an impasse was developing ; Britain seemed determined not to yield her claim to a settlement on the Falklands, yet France was bound by the Family Compact to support Spain if war threatened, and Choiseul saw a very real danger of war in the present instance. He therefore urged Grimaldi not to submit any provocative demands while doubt still remained as to the precise location of the islands in question. Unless Spain could furnish proofs that there were Spaniards on the islands in the time of Charles II, he doubted that the eighth Article of Utrecht would apply. Above all he urged the avoidance of any rupture with Britain for at least the next eighteen months, for neither France nor Spain was yet sufficiently prepared for war. ¹³

This timely word of caution made Grimaldi pause before sending further instructions to Masserano, and the newly returned French Ambassador to London, Guerchy, persuaded Masserano to content himself in the meantime with an unofficial verbal protest, which left Shelburne quite unmoved. Tension remained high, however, and Choiseul feared the impatience of the Spanish Court, especially when Shelburne rejected anew Spain's earlier offer to submit the Manila Ransom issue to an independent arbitrator. ¹⁴

The Manila issue was of course a completely separate matter, and by itself held little risk of a war, but Choiseul saw the possibility that Spain could be goaded to a rupture if Britain remained obdurate and uncoöperative on the Falklands issue as well as

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13. Archivo General de Simancas, Inglaterra, legajo 6962, Choiseul to Grimaldi, 2 October 1766, quoted in Abarca, pp.388-392 ; copies to Ossun and Durand in AECP Espagne 547 and AECP Angleterre 471 are cited by Martin-Allanic, I, 446-7. See also Goebel, 248-9.
 14. Goebel, pp.252-3 ; Martin-Allanic, I, 448-9, and II, 922-3 ; Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France . . . XXV-2, Angleterre, iii (1698-1791), edited by P. Vaucher (Paris, 1965), pp.431-2.

the Manila Ransom. Choiseul believed (rightly) that Chatham would go to war rather than be seen to yield either point, yet he knew that neither France nor Spain was ready for another war. It was in his own interest, therefore, to adopt the role of peacemaker. He first of all sounded former Ambassador Hertford, who was then on holiday in Paris, and satisfied himself that Britain was not so bent on war as not to listen to a compromise solution. Choiseul then devised a plan which he proposed privately to Hertford at the time of Rochford's arrival in Paris. ¹⁵

In view of the misunderstanding which bedevilled the British side of this negotiation, it is essential to make clear what Choiseul understood by his first proposal, and what Shelburne understood of it from Hertford's report. Choiseul claimed that he could bring Spain to pay the Manila Ransom next January, if Britain accepted the French as arbitrators, and desisted from making any establishment on the Falkland Islands, agreeable to the eighth article of Utrecht. Somehow, Shelburne received the impression that the proposal was much simpler, that it did not involve any arbitration, and that Spain would pay the full ransom if Britain left the Falklands, without any reference to prior right under Utrecht or Britain's claim to navigate freely in the South Seas. ¹⁶

Choiseul repeated his proposal to Rochford at their first conference at Versailles on 2 November. He boasted of having stopped Spain from lodging a strong protest over the Falklands affair, and pointed to the cancellation of the proposed expedition of 1750 as evidence that Britain recognized Spanish claims under Utrecht. ¹⁷

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15. Chatham Correspondence, edited by Taylor and Pringle (1838-40), III, 117-120, Hertford to Conway, 20 October 1766; Martin-Allanic, I, 337, II, 925-6; Goebel, pp.249-251.
 16. See SP 78/272, f.29, Rochford to Shelburne, 13 January 1767, Secret; and Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.97, Shelburne to Rochford, 2 January 1767, Secret (not in SP).
 17. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 November 1766.

Choiseul claimed that Britain had then clearly yielded whatever right she had to the islands. Rochford had evidently been warned by Shelburne before leaving London not to become entangled in the details of the Falklands issue without prior instructions from home, so Rochford "waived entirely entering with Him [Choiseul] into a Discussion of this Matter," and merely observed in passing that to his knowledge that right had never been yielded, and it was ridiculous of Spain to pretend that British ships had no right to navigate and make discoveries in any part of the world. Choiseul fell silent at this, and after some time murmured, "but not in the South Seas." He then immediately turned the conversation to the Manila Ransom, and confessed that he was puzzled by Britain's continued refusal to submit this affair to arbitration ;

"..and then to my great Surprise [Rochford relates] he flung out that the two Affairs of the Isles Malouines and the Manila Ransom might accommodate each other ; and, says he, you who know the whole Transaction of the Manila Ransom, if the Two Courts leave it to you and me to determine, [sic] I will undertake to finish it in half an hour."

After a moment's silence, Rochford could only say that he would refer the proposal to London and await further instructions. ¹⁸

In the meantime, in London, Guerchy and Masserano had continued their attempts to persuade Shelburne that Britain had no business setting up a colony on a Spanish possession, and Masserano like Choiseul made use of the cancellation of the 1750 expedition to show that Britain recognized Spain's claims under the Treaty of

18. Shelburne Papers, Volume 23, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 November 1766, No.2 ; Martin-Allanic, II, 926, citing AECP Angleterre, 471, f.297, Choiseul to Guerchy, 5 November 1766 ; Choiseul had earlier made the point that Britain's backing down in 1750 demonstrated her acceptance of the 8th Article of Utrecht, to Richmond's Secretary, Lennox, in September ; SP 78/271, f.8, Lennox to Shelburne, 17 September 1766.

Utrecht, but Shelburne denied that any such conclusion could be drawn, and maintained that Britain had on the contrary fully asserted her right at that time, merely deferring the expedition to a more propitious time. However, his attempt to illustrate the emptiness of the Spanish objections by reference to a map was a blunder, for as soon as he saw it, Masserano exclaimed that the Falklands and Malouines were in fact the same islands.¹⁹

The arrival of Rochford's 5 November dispatch a few days later confirmed the possibility reported by Hertford of a solution to the impasse which now prevailed in London. After intensive Cabinet consultations in the week that followed, the King directed Shelburne to inform Rochford that it was agreed "to meet the Idea of Combining . . . the Two Objects of the Manila Ransom, and the Establishment of the Faulkland Isles." [sic] But this was a very tentative move, hedged about with conditions and provisos which Shelburne attempted to explain in a very long dispatch which he wrote himself, at night, "to avoid entrusting it," even to his Under-Secretary.²⁰

Shelburne fastened upon Choiseul's phrase that he would undertake to finish both matters 'in half an hour,' and observed that Masserano had recently used almost the same words ; on the previous Monday, he had told Shelburne that the Manila Ransom would be paid in January, if the Falklands issue could be resolved.²¹ But Masserano's Instructions went no further than authorizing him to listen to any

19. Martin-Allanic, II, 927, citing AECP Angleterre, 471, f.304, Guerchy to Choiseul, 7 November 1766, and f.310, 7 November 1766.

20. Shelburne Papers, Volume 23, f.45, Shelburne to Rochford, 17 November 1766, Secret and Confidential (not in SP).

21. This part of the dispatch is quoted in the brief account by Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, in his Life of William Earl of Shelburne (London, 1875-6), II, 12, for which he had access to the Lansdowne Papers, of which Shelburne's Papers then formed a large part before being purchased by the American collector, William L. Clements. Goebel, p.255, alone notices this clue to the missing letters.

British proposals, and Shelburne did not think it proper to say how far he would be open to receive any proposal from Spain, so nothing came of the exchange. But now, from Choiseul's remarkable statement to Rochford, it seemed that some sort of accommodation might be possible without recourse to arbitration or mediation, both of which methods were incompatible with the King's dignity.

Rochford was therefore to encourage Choiseul to use his influence with the Spanish Ministers, to bring them to meet Britain's just claims. In so doing, Rochford was to be very careful not to say "anything that can contribute to confirm a Union that we can never approve, or suffer the French to take Possession of the Negotiation under the Pretence of Mediating, or under any other Name." He was also to be on the alert for "any Instances of France in behalf of Spain, if they can be interpreted to contain the least Degree of Menace."

In short, Shelburne stressed that Britain upheld her original claim to "the Islands of Faulkland, improperly & affectedly called of late, by the French, the Isles Malouines," (!) and that Rochford must remind Choiseul that Britain would never yield her undoubted right to navigate freely in the South Seas, "the Spaniards' Romantick & absurd Notions to the Contrary notwithstanding."

As for the eighth article of Utrecht on which these 'Notions' were based, Shelburne argued that this turned on the commerce between places actually occupied and possessed at the time, and covered by the American Treaty of 1670, and applied moreover to individuals wishing to trade with Spanish territories ; it was never held to prohibit other nations from navigating in the southern oceans. ²²

22. Shelburne Papers, Volume 23, f.45, Shelburne to Rochford, 17 November 1766, Secret and Confidential. (in Shelburne's own hand, written at night, from Hill Street).

These instructions, here summarized as clearly as possible, were anything but clear in the original. Shelburne had written a very long, discursive, and poorly arranged dispatch, some points occurring almost at random, as if recorded in whatever order they came to mind. It was in fact not at all characteristic of Shelburne's usual style ; some allowance should be made perhaps for the lateness of the hour and the lack of time for revision before sending off the courier. But whatever the cause, there were several points left unresolved, which led to a serious misunderstanding between Rochford and Shelburne. It may be noted here that while rejecting firmly any sort of mediation or arbitration, no other means were suggested for meeting "the Idea of combining . . . the Two Objects," other than encouraging Choiseul to persuade Spain to accept Britain's position. Most important of all, Shelburne nowhere mentioned the amount to be demanded for the Manila Ransom. This was to prove a crucial omission, for despite the fact that Britain's last offer to Spain had been for a much-reduced amount, Shelburne was thinking in terms of the totality of the original demand. ²³

Faced with these instructions, Rochford must have realized that it was up to him to devise a more specific proposal which would resolve the two issues without recourse to French mediation. When he spoke next to Choiseul, on the morning of 25 November, Rochford was relieved to hear the minister declare that he had "no sort of Inclination to be the Mediator in this Affair," for

23. For the later phase of the Manila Ransom issue, after Rochford left Madrid, see above Chapter 10, pp.307-309 ; Spain had rejected Britain's reduced demand, and had insisted on arbitration by some disinterested party, naming the King of Prussia, but Britain had in turn rejected this proposal, leaving the matter at an impasse.

this would expose him to the risk of bringing "the whole Spanish Ministry on his back" if anything went wrong. His only wish was to see the present dispute between Britain and Spain finished, "and expeditiously."

This led Rochford to speak of his own thoughts upon ways and means to resolve the two main points at issue, along the lines already suggested by Choiseul. He was careful to avoid making any direct proposal, but merely outlined a scheme that might be suitable for Choiseul to recommend to Spain. This was simply that Britain and Spain, without entering into any discussion of rights or claims, should both agree to desist for the present from making any settlement on the Falkland Islands. This could be done privately, by an exchange of letters between the two respective Secretaries of State.²⁴ In return, Spain would agree to an immediate settlement of the Manila Ransom to Britain's satisfaction.

Rochford hoped he had expressed himself in a manner, "though excessively civil, as firm as I believe Your Lordship would desire, and without committing the King or his Servants or myself in any shape whatsoever." Rochford thought Choiseul "approved much of the language I held," since he remarked upon Rochford's "fair method of proceeding."

Thinking in terms of the last exchanges between Britain and Spain over the Manila Ransom, Rochford naturally assumed that someone, somewhere, would still have to adjust the actual amount of the Ransom to be paid. Choiseul warned Rochford that if this further negotiation were to be held in London, Masserano would

24. It may be noted in passing that here is an interesting anticipation of the "secret promise" solution which finally resolved the more serious Falklands crisis of 1770 ; on which see Goebel, 316-363.

make no move without referring to Madrid for fresh instructions on every little point, thus causing great delays, and in that case he had doubts, "from the temper and Dilatoriness of the Court of Spain, of this Affair's coming to a speedy Conclusion."

Instead, Choiseul had a better suggestion ; "he thinks that as all the Manila affair passed through my [Rochford's] hands at Madrid, it may, with propriety, be a natural pretence for my treating the affair here with Count Fuentes." Choiseul assured Rochford in utmost confidence that though he would not himself interfere or mediate in any way, if any serious difficulty arose, he would use his influence with the Spanish Court to bring Fuentes to a "reasonable compliance." Choiseul then repeated that he much preferred Rochford's suggested solution to any scheme involving his own direct mediation.

Rochford was suitably modest in relating this suggestion that he should negotiate the amount of the Ransom at Paris ; "I hope your Lordship will not believe I want to have the honor of transacting this Affair (I am too sensible how arduous the Task will be, to covet it) yet I must not conceal from your Lordship the Duc de Choiseul's Notions about it." This show of reluctance could not, however, obscure the obvious fact that Rochford's Madrid experience made him the ideal choice for such a negotiation. ²⁵

That Rochford was pleased with his morning's work is evident from a letter he wrote to Chatham three days later, in which he claims that he found Choiseul:

25. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.63, Rochford to Shelburne, 26 November 1766, Secret and Confidential (not in SP) ; written in Rochford's own hand.

"... so sincerely terrified (if I may use the expression) at the Court of Spain's taking some absurd step, that I am confident there is no reasonable proposal he would not come into, for accommodating the Manila ransom and the affair of the islands of Falkland."

Rochford later went on to add ;

"Your Lordship will have seen what I wrote by the last messenger to Lord Shelburne ; and if I did not mistake his Lordship, what I answer for to bring about will be entirely agreeable to the views of our government ; and your Lordship may be assured, that the Duc de Choiseul does not mean to have it appear in any shape, that the French Court interferes in our disputes with Spain ; any delicacy we may have upon that point I am persuaded I can set right here in a minute's conversation with the Duc de Choiseul." ²⁶

But in fact, Rochford's initiative and enthusiasm had already carried him further than Shelburne had intended. It was doubly unfortunate that Shelburne should have given warning of this in a brief note that was, if anything, yet more cryptic than his earlier instructions.

Shelburne merely observed that there had been a malentendu recently between Guerchy and Hertford, which caused Guerchy to refuse to discuss the Falklands issue for a time. He had broken his silence by visiting Chatham, and reading part of a dispatch from Choiseul, which Chatham told him "retained so little of what had been first thrown out, that the Idea was not only changed by it, mais qu'elle s'evanouit." ²⁶ Shelburne did not pause

26. Chatham Correspondence, edited by Taylor and Pringle (1838-40), III, 131-134, Rochford to Chatham, 28 November 1766, Private.

to elucidate this expression, and only added that the King's sentiments remained the same ; he would adhere to his established principles, not yielding any just claim. Any sort of arbitration was absolutely out of the question. ²⁷

On 3 December at Versailles, Rochford heard from Choiseul of Guerchy's malentendu with Hertford, but was surprised to notice that Choiseul seemed very pleased ("in raptures") with the account Guerchy had given of his talks with Chatham, and even "expressed how happy he was to find His Lordship's pacifick Sentiments tally so exactly with his own." As for the Manila-Falklands affair, Choiseul had already written to Grimaldi, urging that "there was no other way of finishing an Affair which, if left unfinished, must be attended with sinister consequences, than by following the Method I had the honor to acquaint Your Lordship with in my last dispatch." Choiseul had also mentioned Rochford's suggested 'Method' to Fuentes, the Spanish Ambassador at Paris, from whom he gathered that Charles III might prefer to let the Ransom be settled as if between the town of Manila and its English conquerors, represented by General Draper, than in his own name. But altogether Choiseul's consistent and helpful tone encouraged Rochford to be quite hopeful ;

"I must confess my Lord I think upon the whole things seem to wear a very smooth aspect, & if no unlucky contretemps happens the points which were most likely to disturb the Tranquility of Europe will soon be accommodated. I believe I need not say how happy I shall be if any part of my conduct here can in the least degree contribute to it." ²⁸

27. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.71, Shelburne to Rochford, 29 November 1766, Private & Most Secret (not in SP).

28. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.75, Rochford to Shelburne, 4 December 1766, Private and Secret (not in SP).

Rochford's mood of confident optimism was rudely shattered by Shelburne's next dispatch :

" . . the Difference between the Duc de Choiseul's first proposal to Lord Hertford, and that afterwards communicated here, and since urged to you, does not seem to have struck Your Excellency, so much as it has done the King's Servants here."

At last Shelburne explained what he had understood by Hertford's report of Choiseul's first proposal, namely, that if what regarded the Falklands affair could be accommodated, the Manila Ransom would be paid in January next, without mention of any further difficulties or necessity for negotiation. It was this prospect of a speedy settlement of a just claim, and this alone, which induced the King to listen to the proposal. However,

"any Change as to the Sum proposed to be paid, or the Mode of Payment, necessarily altered the very Ground of the Proposal, in what regarded His Majesty. It was upon this Account Count de Guerchy [sic] was told, that the Idea was not only changed, mais qu'elle s'evanouit. As it now stands, little further seems to be expected 'till the Arrival of Letters from Madrid." 29

What had gone wrong ? How did the misunderstanding occur ? It would seem that Hertford had reported a simplified version of Choiseul's original proposal, which from its simplicity and absence of ^{any} hint of arbitration or further negotiation, had appealed to the British Cabinet. Rochford's first report of Choiseul's proposal was also brief and simplified, though it did contain a clear hint of French mediation. Guerchy, on the other

29. SP 78/271, f.154, Shelburne to Rochford, 12 December 1766, Secret ; copy in Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.83. This single letter as it stands in SP 78 is incomprehensible without the previous secret correspondence now in the Shelburne Papers.

hand, understood Choiseul's proposal in its full and correct sense, as embodying French arbitration on the amount of the Ransom, and it was presumably this difference which, when it became apparent, caused the malentendu between Guerchy and Hertford. Not surprisingly, when Guerchy spoke of French arbitration, Chatham rejected the idea as so changing the original proposal that Britain could no longer accept it. ³⁰

Yet Shelburne in his rebuke of 12 December clearly applies Chatham's exclamation to "any Change as to the Sum proposed to be paid, or the Mode of Payment." This must refer to Rochford's own suggestion regarding the adjustment of the ransom, made at Paris several days after Guerchy's interview with Chatham. It cannot refer to the idea of French mediation, which had been rejected by Chatham, and indeed by Rochford himself on 25 November, and was promptly abandoned by Choiseul as a result. How had Shelburne confused these two quite distinct ideas ?

Rochford himself had understood Chatham's phrase to refer to the idea of French arbitration, as he hastened to explain in a letter of 18 December. He had gathered this from Choiseul's account of Guerchy's interview with Chatham. The real source of confusion was Shelburne's failure to state his assumption that the Ransom would be paid in full. This becomes apparent from Rochford's explanation of his own assumption that it would be a sum nearer the reduced amount last offered by de Visme at Madrid ;

30. Martin-Allanic, II, 929 ; Coquelle, "Le comte de Guerchy," Revue des Etudes Historiques, 74 (1908), 466, citing AECP Angleterre, 471, fos. 352 and 376, Guerchy to Choiseul, 21 November 1766, and Choiseul to Guerchy, 24 November 1766 ; Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France . . . XXV-2, Angleterre, iii (1698-1791), edited by P. Vaucher (Paris, 1965), pp. 424, 432.

"I could never guess whether it had been fixed if the whole Demand of the Manila Ransom was expected to be paid, or only what Mr de Visme had offered to accept in full for it by Orders from our Court ; but as that Offer was not at the time accepted, It was natural to me, who was, and am still in the Dark with regard to the Totality of the Sum expected by Us, to conclude that after it was settled that the Ransom should be paid if the Affair of the Islands could be accommodated, that it must be adjusted somewhere or other what the Tantum was to be. This was what led me in to say that the final Regulation of it could be settled here . ." 31

Shelburne at last saw the reason for Rochford's suggestion of a further negotiation on the Ransom, and wrote a long-winded apology on 2 January 1767 ; "I am very sorry I did not convey my meaning . . so clearly as to render it impossible to mistake its purport." In his résumé of the correspondence on his side, Shelburne admits to some uncertainty in framing his Instructions of 17 November, because of the slight discrepancy between Hertford's report of Choiseul's first proposal, which was very simple, and Rochford's report of 5 November, with its suggestion of French mediation. In wording his Instructions, Shelburne was trying to avoid the two pitfalls of yielding too much on either point merely for the sake of gaining the other, and allowing even a shadow of French interference in the settlement. In view of Choiseul's promise that the Ransom would be paid next January, Shelburne gathered that there was no intention of a gradual liquidation, and assumed from this that the original claim would therefore be paid in full. But there could be no further

31. Shelburne Papers, Vol. 23, f. 87, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 December 1766, Private and Secret (not in SP).

negotiation regarding the Ransom ; Shelburne expected speedy payment of the full amount, in return for Britain's desisting from an establishment in the Falklands, without even the shadow of a negotiation, with the claims of the respective Crowns passed over in silence. He later added that Masserano himself had all along maintained that as the King of Spain's dignity was involved, Charles III would think himself obliged to pay the whole amount or nothing. As late as this, 23 January, Shelburne could still not believe that Choiseul's first proposal held any idea of arbitration. ³³

Shelburne had now "but very few Words in Command from His Majesty." Essentially, he had listened to the French proposal in good faith, and would not allow the substance of the first simple proposal to be negotiated away. If Spain raises fresh difficulties, Britain will retain the station in question on the Falklands, and continue to insist on payment of the Manila Ransom, until such time as Spain is more disposed "to do justice, where it is so unquestionably due." Shelburne concluded on a lofty note ; "In the meantime it may be easily judged whether the Conduct of His Majesty tends most to preserve the Publick Tranquility, or that of France and Spain." ³²

Now that the misunderstanding had been clarified, and Rochford fully understood that as the "Totality of the Manila Ransom was expected," there would be no need for his proposed adjustment at Paris, he returned to the task of encouraging Choiseul

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32. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.97, Shelburne to Rochford, 2 January 1767, Secret (not in SP) ; part of this letter is printed in Fitzmaurice's Life of William Earl of Shelburne (1876), II, 13-14.
33. SP 78/272, f.40, Shelburne to Rochford, 23 January 1767, Most Secret ; copy in Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.117.

to use his influence to help bring the Spanish to a settlement on the simple lines adopted by the British Government. In an interview on the morning of 13 January, Rochford was determined "to push the Duke of Choiseul as far as was decent, to know what We had to expect or depend upon with Regard to the speedy Conclusion of the Two Affairs."

But after some preliminary discussion, Choiseul confessed that he still awaited an answer from Spain. He had written to Ossun, the French Ambassador at Madrid, ordering him to press the Spanish Court to listen to the terms now proposed by Britain, since Grimaldi feared broaching such a topic before the King of Spain, and Ossun had quite recently outlined the proposals in an audience with Charles III. But until all the Councillors were gathered together, he reported (Alva being absent), there could be no decision taken and no answer made to Choiseul. ³⁴

Rochford was concerned at the long delay in the negotiation while he and Shelburne were sorting out their differences, and he had warned Shelburne in mid-December, as he warned him again now in January, that if either the French or the Spanish began to doubt whether Britain attached as much importance as she professed to her Falklands establishment, then there would be little hope of any settlement combining this affair with the Manila Ransom. Rochford therefore urged Shelburne to remember "the Necessity there is of keeping M. de Guerchy in Alarm about Our making an Establishment in the Isles of Falkland, untill the Two Affairs are finally adjusted." The only thing to prevent a settlement was "their being ³⁵ firmly persuaded that We are not serious as to that Establishment."

34. SP 78/272, f.29, Rochford to Shelburne, 13 January 1767, Secret ; copy in Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.109.

35. *ibid.*; for the similar earlier warning, see Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.87, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 December 1766, Private and Secret.

Despite Chatham's insistence that Britain would never give up Port Egmont, the Spanish Ministers had already guessed that Britain was not prepared to go to war on this issue alone, nor even over the Manila Ransom, and therefore decided to call Britain's bluff. Ossun's report of 12 January reached Choiseul on 25 January, informing him that the Spanish Court insisted on arbitration for the Manila Ransom, and would listen to the project to link this with the Falklands affair only if threatened with immediate hostilities. Charles III had not, after all, taken kindly to this "proposition transactionelle." Grimaldi accordingly was to instruct Masserano to renew his verbal complaints against the British presence on the Falklands, and to demand the evacuation of Port Egmont. Furthermore, Grimaldi politely informed Choiseul that his assistance was not needed in an affair which now concerned Britain and Spain alone, and requested that he resume sole charge of the negotiations. ³⁶

Choiseul concealed this turn of events from Rochford until early in February, assisted by the accident that Rochford had "a violent Cold and Sore Throat" which kept him confined to bed for some time at the close of January. Choiseul made his first mention of the answer from Spain to Rochford's Secretary of Embassy, Porten, and even so merely observed that Spain wished to treat the Manila affair direct with Britain, rather than with French assistance. Rochford finally heard the full details from Choiseul on 18 February, when Choiseul "flung out rather in a peevish Manner against the Court of Spain," that they seemed at Madrid "as little willing" as Britain to let France assist in resolving the present disputes.

36. Martin-Allanic, II, 929-930, citing AECF Espagne, 548, f.39, Ossun to Choiseul, 12 January 1767, and *ibid.*, f.119, Choiseul to Ossun, 29 January 1767; Coquelle, "Le comte de Guerchy," Revue des Etudes Historiques, 74 (1908), 467-8, citing AECF Angleterre, 473, f.34, copy, Grimaldi to Masserano, 20 January 1767, and *ibid.*, f.106, Choiseul to Guerchy, 2 February 1767.

Rochford was not really much surprised at Spain's vigorously independent attitude. He had mentioned to Shelburne on 28 January that he knew Choiseul was not satisfied by Grimaldi's private correspondence with him, and furthermore had heard that the Spanish Court greatly resented Choiseul's suggestion that they should pay the Manila Ransom simply to get the British out of the Falklands and thereby avoid war. Nor was Rochford at all surprised by Grimaldi's attitude in wishing to take sole charge of the negotiations ; "as I perfectly know the Fund of Vanity he is possessed of." 37

Choiseul had remarked at the start of the negotiation that France was bound under the Family Compact to assist Spain in the event of unprovoked hostilities against her. But it was quite a different case if Spain was bent on forcing the issues between herself and Britain to the point of war. On 5 March, Ossun reported that Spain would not take any violent action such as ousting the British from the Falklands unless she could be assured of French support in any resulting war. Choiseul's response to this had already been made plain by Guerchy to Masserano in London ; that France would not be ready to support Spain in another war until the end of 1769 at the earliest. This caused consternation in Madrid, with the result that Masserano did not after all pursue the Falklands affair with any vigour or firmness. 38

But what of the Manila Ransom ? Rochford's own opinion was that this should be pressed even more vigorously than before :

37. SP 78/272, fos.59, 77, 91, 101, Rochford to Shelburne, 28 January, 4 February, 12 February, 18 February ; all marked Secret.

38. Goebel, pp.259-261, citing inter alia AECP Espagne, 548, Ossun to Choiseul, 5 March 1767. Ramsey, pp.179-181, citing AECP Angleterre, 473, f.106, Choiseul to Guerchy, 2 February 1767, and f.77 for a copy of Grimaldi to Masserano, 20 January 1767.

" . . My Zeal for the Success of this Business makes me venture to repeat what I before said . . that our insisting on its [the Manila Ransom] being paid and menacing [?with] an Establishment in the Isles of Falkland would infallibly have its Weight ; and I must at the same time observe that I have still no Reason to change my Opinion with Regard to the Duke of Choiseul's Sentiments of this Affair, for I will take it upon me to assure Your Lordship that whenever He is called upon either by Us or Spain, He will do his utmost Endeavours to bring it to a Conclusion, for He is certainly greatly apprehensive that by the Manner of acting of the Court of Spain this Affair may meet with some Rubbs that may finally endanger the Peace of Europe." ³⁹

But nothing was done. Britain did not press the Manila Ransom demand any further than stating once again her undoubted right to a just claim. The potential crisis passed, without resolving any of the points at issue, and indeed without making any discernible progress from the impasse from which the tension of November had developed. Both sides chose not to press their respective claims, and the situation simply cooled off, only to erupt anew in 1770. ⁴⁰

Why did Britain fail to press the Manila Ransom at this time ? It was to prove in fact her last opportunity to have any chance of bringing Spain to pay the Ransom, and having lost it, the Ransom was never paid. The explanation lay within the British Ministry, where Chatham had virtually abdicated his role as leader of the Cabinet after being rebuked in Parliament in December, and

39. SP 78/272, f.101, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 February 1767, Secret.

40. Goebel, pp.260-261 ; Ramsey, pp.181-2. See also Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France . . . XXV-2, Angleterre, iii (1698-1791), edited by P. Vaucher (Paris, 1965), xxi-xxii, 432.

had taken his gout down to Bath, leaving the Ministry in confusion and disarray. Rochford heard of this sorry state of affairs from his friend Albemarle at the end of January. Albemarle summed up the situation in these terms ;

"He [Chatham] governs absolutely, never deigns even to consult any of the Ministers, is now at Bath, & all business is at a Stop . . how long this sort of Government will last, God knows . . I think it cannot last long ; dissatisfied people look shy at one another, necessity will make them unite sooner or later."⁴¹

Chatham's Administration had already shown signs of splitting apart with the resignation of the remainder of Rockingham's friends in November 1766, after the failure of Chatham's attempt to bring in Bedford's followers. Little wonder that Shelburne's dispatches in November had less than his usual clarity ; he was distracted by the tensions within the Ministry and preoccupied with formulating a policy for America (before 1768 the Southern Secretary was also responsible for the Colonies). In the course of 1767, he was to become increasingly alienated from his fellow ministers. This was to affect Rochford again in 1768, in the crisis over Corsica.⁴²

Rochford's role in the abortive attempt to combine the two issues of the Manila Ransom and the Falkland Islands at the end of 1766 has been examined in perhaps excessive detail because previous writers have done less than justice to him, not having

41. Pitt Papers, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan ; Albemarle to Rochford, Arlington Street, London, 23 January 1767.

42. For these developments, see Brooke, Chatham Administration, pp. 38-62, 92-110, and J. Norris, Shelburne and Reform (London, 1963), pp. 31-54.

made use of the vital private correspondence between Rochford and Shelburne. It is not strictly fair to say simply that Rochford misunderstood his Instructions ; the misunderstanding was on both sides, and was more complex, involving deeper differences than a simple mistake. Shelburne's Instructions of 17 November were far from clear, and his basic assumptions were not stated, which resulted in Rochford's proceeding on a different assumption. Yet it is arguable that Rochford's suggested method for a solution was more closely in tune with the realities of the situation, and had a better chance of succeeding than the narrower, simpler proposal understood by the British Cabinet. Rochford clearly thought it better to resolve the Falklands dispute by getting at least some of the Ransom, rather than leave both issues at a dangerous impasse, which might flare into crisis yet again. Events were to prove him correct in this. Yet there was never any real likelihood that Spain would agree to the simpler solution, which seemed to them to involve paying the whole Ransom merely to get the British off the Falklands, when Britain had previously lowered her original demand to a much smaller sum. It was not surprising that Spain should adhere to her request for independent arbitration. Rochford's expectation of a further negotiation to adjust the amount of the Ransom may well have resulted in further delays, despite Choiseul's promise to help expedite any such talks, but it would at least have committed Spain to pay some of the Ransom, and above all would have resolved for the time being the dispute over the Falklands. Much would have depended, however, on Choiseul's influence over Spanish counsels, which was here shown to be rather less than he himself assumed.

CHAPTER 15 : Ambassadorial Routine and Ministerial Ambitions, 1767.

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Ambassadorial Routine
and Ministerial Ambitions, 1767.

The greater part of Rochford's routine business at Paris originated from his Instructions, which have already been summarized above.¹ These included both specific and general directives, requiring either representations to the French Ministers or the steady accumulation and reportage of information. Many individual cases naturally stemmed from the Ambassador's traditional duty of assistance to British subjects abroad, while others arose in consequence of French complaints. Nor was Rochford content merely to fulfil the letter of his Instructions ; as at Turin and Madrid, his zeal and initiative gave rise to a number of constructive and useful proposals. This chapter is intended to convey the range and diversity of Rochford's work at Paris, and to give some impression of the social and diplomatic circles in which he moved. His hopes for a Cabinet post at home just prior to his first short leave in August 1767 form an important episode in Rochford's career with which to end the chapter.

Rochford's paramount duty as British Ambassador was to assess France's sincerity towards the peace and her capacity to resume hostilities in the near future. In practice, this meant close observation of her financial resources and her armed forces, but above all, a constant watch over the policies and activities of the French King's all-powerful minister, the Duc de Choiseul.

1. See Chapter 13, pp.372-375.

The talks on the Manila Ransom and Falkland Islands gave Rochford several opportunities of forming his first impressions of Choiseul as a minister, and cause to reflect upon French policies towards the rest of Europe in addition to Spain and Britain.

Judging by his reception at Versailles, and Choiseul's attitude in their various conversations, Rochford cautiously decided that he had started out "upon very good terms with the Duc de Choiseul,"² and he hoped that nothing would arise from the Manila-Falklands affair to change this happy start ; "I should be sorry on many accounts to lose the Duc de Choiseul's Confidence."³ Rochford's first considered impression he expressed in these terms ;

"The Duc de Choiseul has no Objection to talking, and though very able and clever, Indiscretions sometimes fall from him."⁴

He had gathered this impression at their very first interview on 2 November, and seen it confirmed in subsequent conversations. At that first interview, when Choiseul boasted of having restrained the Spanish from lodging a strong complaint about the Falkland Islands, Rochford remarked, "by way of Parenthesis . . . that he is Volatile enough to be easily led away from the Point he is talking of," and thought that in so boasting, Choiseul

". . . let himself go here, through Vanity perhaps, to shew the Influence he had over the Spanish Ministers, but if that was his Motive he was not in my Opinion the less indiscreet."⁵

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2. BM Add MSS 33071, f.51, Rochford to Newcastle, 20 November 1766.
 3. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.63, Rochford to Shelburne, 26 November 1766, Secret and Confidential.
 4. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.91, Rochford to Shelburne, 24 December 1766, Secret.
 5. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 November 1766.

Nevertheless, Rochford guessed that Choiseul's was at most times a calculated indiscretion, as he indicated in an important letter to Chatham :

"Your Lordship knows that a prime minister here has very extensive power, and I am convinced none of the Duc de Choiseul's predecessors ever enjoyed it in a greater extent. He has made himself absolutely necessary to the French King ; and though much abuse in private is vented against him, it avails but little, and I see not the least probability of his losing any ground, unless war was to break out ; in that case, his friends seem to be apprehensive for him. From private motives, therefore, Your Lordship sees he must be inclined to pacific measures. He is of a frank and generous disposition ; and though very open, not so indiscreet as people of his turn generally are, and I believe, conscious himself of being rather superficial, he is guarded in what he advances, and remarkable for being exact in what engagements he enters into. I have had the good luck to gain his confidence, and hope when occasion offers I shall be able to turn it to account." ⁶

Choiseul repeatedly assured Rochford that he was sure Spain wished to avoid another war, and gave Rochford his word on this. Rochford, though "always cautious in giving my Opinion of what were the Intentions of a Court," was inclined to think Choiseul sincere in these assurances, since he had himself reported from Madrid "that the Court of Spain was not in a Situation to quarrel with any Power whatsoever." ⁷ Choiseul clearly shared this view of Spain's situation ; "for says he [to Rochford on 13 January 1767] They of all the Three Powers are the least prepared for a Rupture, et quant à Nous, Nous ne le voulons pas, si ça peut s'éviter." ⁸

6. Chatham Correspondence, III, 131-4, Rochford to Chatham, 28 November 1766, Private.

7. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.57, Rochford to Shelburne, 20 November 1766.

8. SP 78/272, f.29, Rochford to Shelburne, 13 January 1767, Secret.

Rochford twice reported that he was sure Choiseul was "as desirous as we can wish to watch over the Conduct of Spain merely with the View of preserving the Publick Tranquility," and that France seriously dreaded a war between Spain and Britain over the Falkland Islands, "as They are altogether unprepared for it."⁹ Not only Choiseul, Rochford thought, but "the rest of his colleagues, as well as the most thinking part of the Nation, wish for peace."¹⁰

Early in January 1767, Rochford's intelligence contacts supplied him with valuable confirmation of his opinions regarding a possible 'Revanche' by France and Spain to recover their losses in the last war ;

"I have long been of opinion that neither the Courts of France or Spain are disposed (nor are they able at this Moment) to commence a New War ; and Your Lordship by looking into my Dispatches whilst I was in Spain, will see that my Sentiments were then the same ; but that I thought, as soon as ever They were prepared, We should find them less accommodating . . ."

Rochford's éclaircissement consisted of two remarks made by Choiseul to the Imperial Ambassador, Count Merci, which were as follows :

"Mon Bût est de ménager les Esprits en Angleterre ; c'est ce que je recommande sans cesse a M. de Guerchy ; et je m'applaudis d'être parvenu à faire suivre mon Flan en Espagne . . . Nous aurons certainement en 1770, la plus belle Armée, une Marine respectable, et de l'argent en Caisse ; les Ministres du Roi travaillent avec le plus grand Zèle, et la meilleure Intelligence, à ces trois Objets."¹¹

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9. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.87, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 December 1766, Private and Secret ; SP 78/272, f.29, Rochford to Shelburne, 13 January 1767, Secret.
 10. Chatham Correspondence, III, 131-4, Rochford to Chatham, 28 November 1766, Private.
 11. SP 78/272, f.5, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 January 1767, Secret ; also quoted in Fitzmaurice's Life of William, Earl of Shelburne (1876), II, 4.

It would appear, therefore, that Rochford was correct in his belief that neither France nor Spain was yet in sufficient readiness for the 'Revanche' against Britain.¹² He rested this belief primarily on the knowledge that France simply could not afford the expense of bringing her armed forces up to the required state of readiness for at least another two years ;

"Their finances are in a bad condition . . and though doubtless they will attend to their Marine, it will be a Work of Time to get it in order."¹³

By May 1767, the situation was not much improved, in Rochford's view. Their finances remained "in general in a very bad Condition," there was talk of a general bankruptcy imminent, and the payment of many Royal pensions had been stopped for twelve months in an attempt to build up an emergency reserve in case of war.¹⁴

There were other drains on the French finances besides pensions ; French foreign policy in eastern and northern Europe in this period was notoriously expensive, few could guess what enormous sums had been devoted over the years to bribes and subsidies, and although Choiseul had cut down considerably on such wasteful expenditure, Rochford kept close watch on one surviving object of French subsidies, namely Sweden.

Rochford made little mention of Sweden in his dispatches to Shelburne, but relayed whatever intelligence he gathered on that subject direct to Sir John Goodricke, the British Envoy at Stockholm. In February 1767 Goodricke thanked Rochford for news

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12. The same conclusion has been reached by two modern writers, Ramsey, pp.173-4, 181-2; and Abarca, "Bourbon 'Revanche' against England," (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Notre Dame, 1964), pp.384-396.
 13. Chatham Correspondence, III, 131-4, Rochford to Chatham, 28 November 1766, Private.
 14. SP 78/272, f.256, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 May 1767, Secret and Confidential.

of the transfer of a very large sum (500,000 livres) to the care of the French Ambassador at Stockholm, and added that Rochford had "judged very right of the Duke of Choiseul's Intentions, and that He is not so indifferent with respect to Sweden as He would appear to be."¹⁵ In fact, Choiseul had decided in 1766 that monies distributed to the members of the Senate had been largely wasted ; this latest sum was destined to pay the debts of the King of Sweden, "to fix him in the interests of France," as Conway belatedly informed Goodricke three months later.¹⁶ Rochford's interest in the affairs of Sweden, or at least French influence there, stood him in good stead for his own term as Northern Secretary after 1768.

He was similarly attentive to French policy in eastern Europe, especially the response of the Court of Vienna to any action by Russia and Prussia regarding Poland at this time. Also in February 1767, Sir Joseph Yorke wrote privately to Rochford from the Hague, reporting whispers that Frederick II of Prussia was making warlike preparations. Conway chose to regard these rumours as "chimerical," but Yorke thought them more serious, and relating to Poland, which would be certain to evoke a vigorous response at Vienna. Rochford already had informations which suggested that Vienna was alarmed by Prussian preparations, namely that Count Merci had twice recently been ordered to demand

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15. The W.S. Lewis/ Walpole Library, Farmington, Conn.; autograph letter, Goodricke to Rochford, 27 February 1767 ; there are only two others from Goodricke in this collection, dated 5 May 1767, and 19 February 1768, (which add details regarding this sum) ; Rochford's letters may well be in the Goodricke Papers at Uppsala University, though I have not yet followed up this possibility, which may be more useful for Rochford's Secretaryship.
 16. British Diplomatic Instructions, Vol.V, Sweden, 1727-1789, edited by J.F. Chance (London, 1928), pp.185-6, Conway to Goodricke, 5 May 1767 ; the best recent account of British policy in Northern Europe at this time is by Michael Roberts, "Great Britain, Denmark, and Russia, 1763-70," in Studies in Diplomatic History, edited by R.M. Hatton and H.S. Anderson (London, 1970), pp.236-267.

French assistance under the treaty of 1756, either 25,000 men or an equivalent subsidy. Choiseul declined such aid, maintaining that the 1756 treaty was purely defensive, yet Merci apparently persisted in the demand. The Russian Minister at Paris, Prince Galitzin, was for his part distributing to the other foreign ministers "a sort of Manifesto," justifying Russia's intervention in the affairs of Poland. ¹⁷

By March, Rochford was convinced his information had been "well-founded," for both Choiseul and Merci had taken exceptional pains to assure him to the contrary, and to make sure that Britain was not encouraging the King of Prussia in his warlike preparations. Choiseul even went so far as to show Rochford a dispatch received from Guerchy on this subject, while Merci ("who is not by far so expert a Minister as the Duc de Choiseul") held the same tone to Rochford, though greatly magnifying Vienna's fears of an attack. Rochford concluded that Vienna's fears must have subsided, or that their plans were laid aside after Choiseul's having "thrown Cold Water upon them." ¹⁸ This conclusion was proven accurate ; only a fortnight later, Choiseul spoke further to Rochford on this subject at great length, and mentioned that their latest letters from Vienna said that their earlier fears were now quieted. ¹⁹

In making these reports, Rochford several times asked for guidance as to the language he should hold on these matters

17. Lewis/Walpole Library, Farmington, Conn.; autograph letter, Yorke to Rochford, 19 February 1767 ; SP 78/272, f.91, Rochford to Shelburne, 12 February 1767, Secret ; SP 78/272, f.115, Rochford to Shelburne, 25 February 1767, Secret.

18. SP 78/272, f.155, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 March 1767, Secret.

19. SP 78/272, f.186, Rochford to Shelburne, 25 March 1767, Secret.

when Choiseul started a discussion on them, yet Shelburne made remarkably little comment on Rochford's reports, and gave him no guidance whatsoever. Shelburne claimed that news from Eastern Europe was so uncertain and full of contradictions as to make it impossible for him to form a satisfactory judgment. He was therefore not at all sure how to advise Rochford, and feared that "a vague Opinion might only mislead." He could only leave it to Rochford's own judgment how to manage his conversations with Choiseul, trusting in Rochford's undoubted "Prudence & Discretion." ²⁰

Rochford thereafter seems to have left the reportage of events in Eastern Europe to those entrusted with that task, though he continued to be informed of them by his fellow British ministers at other capitals. ²¹ But Shelburne was not the only one who had such faith in Rochford's prudence that he was content to see the Paris embassy left largely to its own devices ; the Duke of Newcastle had written in his usual fulsome style at the start of 1767, that

" . . the Court of France, if they are disposed to preserve the Peace, & to live well with Us, must be glad to have an Ambassador of your Ability & Experience, who is so well able, & so well disposed, to cooperate with Them, in carrying those good Intentions into Execution, which is, & ought to be, the View of Both Nations. Happy also it is for us, to have a Minister at so great a Court, who is so able to discover, ²² what is Their True View, & to conform His Conduct accordingly."

It will be evident from the remainder of this chapter whether or not Rochford lived up to these expectations in the routine of business, but for the meantime, as regarded the "True View" of

20. SP 78/272, f.202, Shelburne to Rochford, 3 April 1767, Secret.

21. Lewis/Walpole Library, Farmington, Conn.; autograph letter, Stormont to Rochford, Vienna, 25 March 1767, with news of Russian troops in Poland, is one surviving example of the correspondence which was in the Rochford Papers in 1930 and has since been lost.

22. BM Add MSS 32979, f.1, Newcastle to Rochford, 1 January 1767, copy ; the original of this letter is now in the collection of W.S. Lewis, Farmington, Conn.

the French Ministry, which in effect meant the Duc de Choiseul, Rochford's considered opinion from his first six months' observation, expressed in his masterly dispatch of 7 May 1767, was as follows :

"[Choiseul] is more absolute at this instant than ever, and has made himself so necessary to [the French King] that his Enemies dare not venture to make any direct Attempt against him . . . He is in my Opinion, though very quick, and attentive to Business, not extremely deep, ready enough at finding Expedients, and inclined to listen to any Projects that are proposed to Him, which if He approves of, He makes a Merit of them as if they were his own. He carries his franchise as most of his countrymen do, even to Indiscretion, and often by that means lays himself open to those who know how to profit of it. He is certainly inclined to Peace, but he has an high Sensibility of the Honor of his Nation, and would be more likely to be affected by any attack made against that, than against its real Interest ; a War he knows would give his Enemies at home more opportunities to destroy him, and therefore he will do all he can to avoid it ; for though he is hurt at the great Advantages We gained in the last War, and has a Notion of putting this Country into a Condition to attempt at one time or another the Recovery of her losses, He is well convinced of the Impracticability of such an attempt at present ; He will therefore do all he can to keep up an apparent good Understanding with Us, and it is obvious that he uses his influence with the Courts of Vienna and Madrid to keep them quiet for the present." ²³

This was at the time a fair and accurate estimation ; Rochford felt that Britain had little to fear from France in the immediate future at least. He could scarcely foresee that before the end of his

23. SP 78/272, f.256, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 May 1767, Secret and Confidential.

Paris Embassy, and despite his own warnings and efforts to prevent it, Choiseul would inflict upon Britain her most humiliating diplomatic rebuff since the war, with the fait accompli of the French annexation of Corsica.

The provision of "constant information" regarding the state of France's military forces, especially her Navy, was one of Rochford's most important routine tasks at Paris, as specified in the sixth clause of his "Separate and Private" Instructions.²⁴ Yet it was May 1767, exactly six months after his arrival, before Rochford made any report on this vital subject, and even then he dismissed the state of the French Army in a few sentences ; "The State of their Army is so well known that it is needless to say anything about it." (!) He merely added that there were at present no schemes afoot to augment it, and that its present establishment was maintained only by means of the severest discipline.

The French Marine seemed far more important in Rochford's estimation, and he showed his customary initiative in devising a method for obtaining regular reports from each of the major French ports, which would give "a constant and exact knowledge of it." Unfortunately, no details of this method appear in the correspondence ; he left it for Porten to explain verbally to Shelburne in London. Presumably, Rochford had found a reliable agent, such as he had used at Madrid for such purposes.²⁵ The first fruits of this method are to be seen, however, in a report of 28 May 1767, which suggests

24. See above, Chapter 13, p. 374.

25. SP 78/272, f.256, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 May 1767, Secret and Confidential.

that Rochford made no idle boast ; the report included not only the usual lists of ships and their number of guns, but also details of the crews and shore establishments derived from the pay-books! Whoever Rochford's agent was, he could obviously move freely about the dockyards without suspicion.²⁶

By contrast, Rochford was a great deal more prompt in answering the important new fourth clause of his Instructions regarding French trade, and the main theme of his subsequent discussions with Choiseul on trade matters gave rise to one of his most significant recommendations as Ambassador at Paris.

The collection and close examination of information on French trade was, in Rochford's words, "a Work of Time," yet by the end of his first two months in Paris, he was able to present a full and detailed report, the main conclusions of which he found no cause thereafter to alter. This report ranged from the value and condition of France's sugar trade, and her exports through Hamburg, Holland, Marseilles and Trieste, to her American trade from Bordeaux, the potential still remaining in the sugar islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, and the encouragement of agriculture within France itself by the free transportation of corn from one province to another. He had evidence to show that the exportation of French cod from the Newfoundland banks was as great to Italy and Spain as it had been before the war, and that surplus corn was also being exported at considerable profit to those countries, thanks to incentives for planting a larger

26. SP 78/272, f.299, Rochford to Shelburne, 28 May 1767.

crop than usual. Rochford apologized for not having been able to obtain detailed statistics for the returns of the sugar trade ("though I am sparing in neither Pains nor Expence for it"), but in February he produced figures for the annual returns from the French East India trade since 1750, and was confident of its being a reliable copy.²⁷

Before he left London, Rochford had urged the appointment of a British Consul-General to Paris, to fulfil the same useful rôle he had seen Stanier Porten fulfil at Madrid. It seems beyond doubt that this idea came from Porten himself, just as it seems overwhelmingly likely that Rochford had asked Porten to gather supporting evidence before Rochford's arrival in Paris, for within a few days of his first audiences at Versailles, Rochford submitted for Shelburne's consideration a very full and convincing case for such an appointment. Rochford could not possibly have gathered all this information himself in the short and hectic time since his arrival.

The main argument in favour of a Consul-General for Paris was that redress for difficulties obstructing trade at the sea-ports could only be obtained in Paris, where all essential business passed through the First Clerks.[†] These men had "an immense Influence" on the Ministers, who relied on their judgment in commercial affairs. But the Clerks were "a set of People a Foreign Minister, particularly an Ambassador, cannot apply to." Yet a Consul-General might "with Decency cultivate an Intimacy with them of great Utility, and obtain informations almost impossible to be acquired through any other

27. SP 78/271, f.201, Rochford to Shelburne, 31 December 1766 ;
SP 78/272, f.74, Rochford to Shelburne, 4 February 1767.

† At the Département de Marine, of which Praslin was the Minister.

Channel." Rochford observed that the bankers in Paris were mostly Court bankers who had little knowledge of trade in general ; "It is the Seaports where Informations must be had and Observations made." A Consul-General would be far better able than the King's Ambassador to establish proper contacts with the seaports and the British merchants established in France, and gather therefrom useful information on French trade ; "of which, our not having Consuls has kept us entirely ignorant 'till the Two last Wars." Rochford claimed to have seen this demonstrated whilst he was in Spain, where he realized "the great Use it was to Us having an intelligent Consul-General at Madrid, and Consuls in the Spanish Seaports."

It was not simply the idea which Rochford had to recommend ; in his usual resourceful fashion, he had apparently asked Porten to discover a likely man for the job, and was now able to name one Mr Crammond as the best candidate available. Rochford had already held "a great deal of Discourse with him," and concluded that he was "a most intelligent Man . . . well informed of the Commercial State of this Kingdom, and from his Connections here would in my Opinion be the properest Man to be employed." In addition, Rochford had sounded Choiseul on the question of British Consuls in the French ports, and found that there was nothing to prevent Britain from establishing as many as she wished. It was altogether a splendid piece of practical initiative by Rochford and Porten, all too rare in the diplomatic service of the eighteenth century, which Rochford urged so strongly to the attention of His Majesty's Ministers. 28

28. SP 78/271, f.117, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 November 1766, Separate.

Sadly enough, this eminently useful suggestion was not taken up. One possible reason, though not probably the main one, may have been the expense ; Porten and his successor as Consul-General at Madrid, James Brusby, received salaries of £ 1,000 a year at that post, and an appointee at Paris would not have been content with anything less.²⁹ The successive Ministries of the 1760s were all concerned, though in varying degrees, with economy and retrenchment, no less in the diplomatic service than in America. But Rochford's proposal was in advance of its time. There had been no British Consuls in France since 1688, and it would require at least another Commercial Treaty with France to facilitate their return. This did not occur until the Eden treaty of 1786, though not for want of urging by Rochford ; the pressing need for a new treaty to replace the ineffective 1713 Commercial Treaty of Utrecht was the major theme to emerge from Rochford's dealings with Choiseul over problems of trade.³⁰

In his first few months at Paris, Rochford made several applications on behalf of British traders established in France, claiming in support the Commercial Treaty of Utrecht ;

"which whenever I have done it (though the Duc de Choiseul has sometimes complied with what I have asked) he has constantly told me that the treaty of Commerce of Utrecht had never been ratified."

Choiseul claimed to have pressed this matter at the peace talks of 1762, strongly objecting to its inclusion in the list of treaties to be renewed at the peace, as Britain "never had nor could abide by it," and had been "perpetually infringing it."

29. Journal of the House of Commons, XXXII (1770), 590, 599.

30. D.B. Horn, British Diplomatic Service, 1689-1789 (Oxford, 1961), p.254.

Rochford's most recent case was an application on behalf of a group of British merchants at Bordeaux who had been imprisoned for refusing to serve in the city militia. Choiseul had refused to admit any grounds for their exemption, insisting that as Britain had never ratified the eighth and ninth articles, the Utrecht Commercial Treaty "was of no force." ³¹

Rochford submitted a Memorial, though with "no great hopes of succeeding," in which he claimed the seventh article of the treaty as exempting British merchants from local duties such as militia service, and this paper at least had the useful effect of prompting Choiseul to state his views in writing. It was clear from his reply that the treaty in its old form was unacceptable to France and could not simply be revived, even with the omission of the eighth and ninth articles so obnoxious to Britain. This meant that in the meantime British merchants in France were exposed to the arbitrary will of provincial Governors and minor officials, as Rochford saw it ; "in short, a Treaty of Commerce is absolutely necessary." ³²

In reply to Rochford's plea for guidance, Shelburne instructed him to continue treating the Utrecht Commercial Treaty as a subsisting treaty. It was true, as Choiseul claimed, that the British Parliament had never ratified the articles giving France preferential customs entry to British markets, but he had forgotten that the French Commissaries at the time had signed a Declaration "clearly establishing the validity of all the remaining Articles." As for Rochford's urging for an entirely new treaty,

31. SP 78/272, f.49, Rochford to Shelburne, 22 January 1767, Separate.

32. SP 78/272, fos.113 and 141, Rochford to Shelburne, 25 February and 4 March 1767, Secret.

Shelburne thought this would need very careful investigation of the extent to which commercial circumstances had changed since the time of the Utrecht treaty.³³

Shelburne enclosed a copy in English of the Declaration in question. Rochford already knew of its existence from the Embassy papers, and had mentioned it in his conversations with Choiseul. But the Minister denied that any such Declaration had ever been made. He said he knew that the Commissaries were prepared to make such a declaration when and if the treaty was ratified by the British Parliament, but as this had not been done, and France had waited over half a century for it, he could not admit its validity. Again he offered that if Britain proposed a new commercial treaty he would willingly negotiate upon it.³⁴

Rochford remained convinced that a new treaty was the best solution. He heard that Choiseul met with opposition in Council whenever he tabled Rochford's applications on behalf of British merchants in France, as the other ministers complained that Britain did not show them reciprocity. Above all, he found his own task increasingly intolerable while the French denied the validity of the Utrecht treaty ; "it is almost impossible to go on much longer in the present way . . . our Merchants here will be every year worse used." He admitted the difficulties involved in drafting a new treaty, yet rather than leave the problem entirely to Shelburne to work out, he offered his own thoughts on the matter and indicated possible solutions.³⁵

33. SP 78/272, f.147, Shelburne to Rochford, 13 March 1767.

34. SP 78/272, f.164, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 March 1767.

35. SP 78/272, f.164, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 March 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.256, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 May 1767, Secret and Confidential.

The central difficulty remained that which had prevented the ratification of the Utrecht treaty, namely, the duties of entry. The other articles seemed straightforward and mutually beneficial, and should not meet with any opposition so long as this central problem were solved. The original eighth and ninth articles had provided that duties of entry should be determined reciprocally and published by both countries, but this had never been done because of the difficulty of balancing French luxuries such as wines and brandy against British manufactures, which would not have raised nearly as much revenue. Since then, duties on French imports to Britain had greatly increased, while British imports to France suffered such heavy duties that many articles were in effect prohibited. In the meantime, French manufactures had improved so much that there would be less demand for similar British products. Rochford was sure that the sort of treaty France wished to adopt would result in a reduction of British trade with Spain and Portugal, which was far more profitable to Britain than any alternative trade with France. These general points Rochford supported with a detailed examination of the present duties on British goods entering France, and the difficulties under which British merchants in French ports suffered, especially at Bordeaux, whence most of his information seems to have come. His recommendation was that the awkward problem of duties should be left to one side for the moment, and a limited treaty proposed to give force to the beneficial uncontroversial clauses of the old one, which would remedy most of the difficulties at present facing British merchants in France. ³⁶

36. SP 78/272, f.256, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 May 1767, Secret and Confidential ; *ibid.*, f.261, "A State of the Duties British Goods are subject to in France" (no date).

Apart from the British merchants residing in France, there were other matters which needed the force of a recognized treaty. One such instance was Rochford's failure early in May 1767 to obtain the extradition of an English bankrupt who had fled to France with "effects to a great value." Choiseul refused to oblige, recalling a similar case some years before in which France had granted extradition in the belief that Britain would reciprocate in like cases, but when their request was made, it was rejected.³⁷

There was, however, a simpler remedy than a new formal treaty, and Shelburne recommended Rochford to follow up this line of approach first. This was of course to convince Choiseul that the French Commissaries had in fact made just such a Declaration in 1714 as Britain claimed they had, giving force to the remainder of the agreed clauses of the Utrecht treaty. Choiseul continued to insist that no such Declaration existed, and he was not convinced by Rochford's assurances. Rochford finally had to ask Under-Secretary Sutton to search the correspondence for the 1714 original in French. It was November before Rochford received this document, but it had the desired effect ; Choiseul grudgingly conceded that Britain was fully entitled to claim the validity of the Commercial Treaty of Utrecht. Rochford was vastly relieved ; "I should hope that We shall hear no more of that Business."³⁸

The effect of this concession was soon felt. There had been a new arrêt in September 1767 regulating the Capitation Tax as it affected foreigners living in France. It exempted only those

37. SP 78/272, f.234, Shelburne to Rochford, 28 April 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.271, Choiseul to Rochford, 10 May 1767, copy.

38. SP 78/273, f.152, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 October 1767, Secret ; *ibid.*, f.202, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 November 1767.

not engaged in trade who did not possess houses or property in France, whereas before all foreign merchants had been exempted. Rochford remarked that this would fall hardest on the many Swiss and Genevan merchants in France ; the British merchants could bear the imposition a little more cheerfully now that such vexations as militia duty had been resolved by Choiseul's recognition of the Utrecht Commercial Treaty. The only problems to arise were those of private individuals such as one Mr Pitt who was living in France for the sake of his health, but Choiseul now gave prompt redress in this and two similar cases when Rochford appealed to the Utrecht treaty.³⁹ In the following months however, Choiseul refused redress to several British bankers who had been charged with the Capitation Tax ; but Rochford found he had "entirely mistaken the Article of the Treaty," and this affair was also readily resolved.⁴⁰

Rochford was not alone at Paris in seeking improved conditions for his country's traders ; in the early part of 1767 he kept a close watch on one particular visitor of special interest to himself and Porten, namely, the French Consul-General at Madrid, Béliardi, who was home on leave for discussions with Choiseul. Rochford had of course been "much acquainted" with him at Madrid, and knew him not only as one of Choiseul's creatures, but also as "the most intriguing Genius I have ever met with." Rochford was able to discover something of the instructions which Béliardi carried back to Madrid, and his own correspondents there kept him in touch with Béliardi's efforts to persuade Spain to lower her

39. SP 78/273, f.90, Porten to Shelburne, 16 September 1767 ;
SP 78/274, f.57, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 February 1768.

40. SP 78/274, f.137, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 April 1768.

duties on French manufactured goods, especially woollens, to the detriment of British trade there. But Rochford was confident that Britain was adequately protected by her treaties with Spain, which bound them to give Britain the same advantages offered to any other nation.⁴¹

In November 1767, however, Shelburne informed Rochford of a report from Consul Tatem at Messina that France and Spain were negotiating a new treaty to regulate the privileges of their Consuls in the Mediterranean, and though Choiseul solemnly denied this particular report, he startled Rochford with the news that Béliardi had succeeded in another aspect of his work at Madrid. The problem of visitation of foreign ships in Spanish ports had been a source of constant irritation for Rochford at Madrid, and his only consolation had been that this fell more heavily on the French. But now Béliardi had succeeded in getting a limitation on this practice, by defining more closely the class of vessel liable to be rigorously searched as those of 100 tons or less.⁴²

This was a distinct success for Béliardi, though as Porten pointed out, it was a fairly meagre return for so much effort. Altogether, the work of Rochford and Porten both at Madrid and Paris compared favourably with that of their French rivals at this time. Porten seems clearly to have been the expert on commercial affairs who could give Rochford's own interest and initiative some shape and direction. They made an excellent partnership, which Rochford was to preserve even as Secretary of State.⁴³

41. SP 78/272, fos.59 and 314, Rochford to Shelburne, 28 January and 18 June 1767.

42. SP 78/273, f.199, Shelburne to Rochford, 13 November 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.251, Rochford to Shelburne, 25 November 1767.

43. See for example Porten's masterly report on the proposed commercial treaty between Britain and Naples; SP 78/273, f.269, Porten to Shelburne, 16 December 1767.

Small trading vessels and their usefulness for smuggling also formed the subject of Rochford's first dealings with Choiseul relating to the West Indies. The first such case recommended to Rochford at the very start of his Embassy was that of the Jove, which traded between New York and Jamaica. The Jove had been seized by the French in May 1764, and condemned as a smuggler at Port au Prince under the Edict of 1727, which demanded a bond to prevent illicit trade by foreign vessels visiting French colonial ports. The vessel and cargo had then been sold, as confiscated goods. A firm protest had been made against this proceeding in November 1764, but without success ; it was repeated with similar lack of success by Richmond's Secretary, Lennox, in July 1766. ⁴⁴

Rochford first mentioned this case in his long interview with Choiseul on 2 November, but Choiseul "pretended to have quite forgot it," and asked Rochford to refresh his memory with a written application. While preparing this Memorial in the following week, Rochford mentioned it again, and was surprised to hear Choiseul claim that the Jove had been obviously on a smuggling venture, from the quantity of Spanish coin aboard. Rochford swiftly reminded him that the vessel had been condemned merely under the Edict of 1727, and that the proceedings at Port au Prince had failed to establish the suspicion of smuggling. ⁴⁵

The argument which Rochford used in his Memorial of 25 November was that if France wished to make use of such antiquated regulations against British vessels in the West Indies, then Britain

44. A summary of the case is contained in SP 78/271, f.87, Charles to Shelburne, 22 October 1766.

45. Shelburne Papers, Vol.23, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 November 1766 ; SP 78/271, f.129, Rochford to Shelburne, 12 November 1766.

would have to issue similar orders to her Governors in those parts regarding French vessels. When he spoke to Choiseul again on this matter in mid-December, Choiseul said that both Hertford and Richmond had made this same menace, and he made the same answer to Rochford as he had then, namely, that while Britain was free to make what laws she pleased for her own islands, he was sure Britain would not wish to be seen to protect smugglers. He also read out to Rochford many of the papers relating to this affair, and Rochford paid particular attention to one from the Intendant of Port au Prince, in which he accused the Jove of smuggling, and urged Choiseul never to revoke the Edict of 1727, which was the mainstay of their Caribbean trade.⁴⁶

Choiseul promised Rochford a copy of this letter, but none had appeared by the time Rochford next reminded Choiseul of the Jove, in April 1767. Choiseul had now changed his tune, and claimed that the ship was not condemned under the Edict of 1727, but because the Captain had been found guilty of smuggling! Rochford was astonished at this volte-face, but Choiseul refused to budge from his contention. Rochford laboured in vain to persuade Choiseul to reconsider the case, but found him "determined not to yield in this Affair." Rochford had to admit failure; "all I can say or do has not the Success I could wish."⁴⁷

But Shelburne chose not to pursue the matter further, and there it rested for the remainder of Rochford's Paris embassy.

46. SP 78/271, f.186, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 December 1766.

47. SP 78/272, f.223, Rochford to Shelburne, 16 April 1767.

The case of the Wheel of Fortune was very similar.

This schooner, under Captain Summers, was also seized in 1764 by a French guardacostas in the Caribbean, and was taken to Martinique where it was condemned as a smuggler. Summers protested that this was a thoroughly unjust and ill-proven verdict, and appealed to his own Court to apply pressure on the French to reconsider the case. At the start of 1765, therefore, Hertford made the necessary representations at Paris, but these were unsuccessful and were not persevered with. The owners of the vessel did not give up so easily, however, and finally in April 1767 Shelburne agreed to instruct Rochford to revive the protest, which had "lain dormant for a good while."⁴⁸

As the case had previously been handled in Praslin's department, Choiseul asked Rochford to submit a fresh Memorial, to which Rochford appended copies of Hertford's 1765 papers on the subject. Choiseul replied within the week, merely referring Rochford to the replies then given to Hertford. But Rochford could not find any note of these replies amongst the embassy papers, and had to appeal to Shelburne for copies from the London office.⁴⁹

These revealed that the Wheel of Fortune, like the Jove, had been initially condemned under the French Edict of 1727, though Choiseul now maintained that both had been tried as cases of smuggling. Praslin had left the matter open until the arrival of further informations from Martinique, which did not appear ever to have arrived. Choiseul assured Rochford that he would willingly

48. SP 78/272, f.194, Shelburne to Rochford, 3 April 1767 ; enclosing, f.196, a summary of the case to date.

49. SP 78/272, f.223, Rochford to Shelburne, 16 April 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.230, Rochford to Shelburne, 23 April 1767, enclosing f.232 Choiseul to Rochford, 21 April 1767.

reconsider the case if fresh evidence came to light, but until then he would not even discuss it. Shelburne then decided to take it up with Guerchy in London, but apparently met the same response, for nothing more was heard of Captain Summers or the Wheel of Fortune in the remainder of Rochford's embassy at Paris.⁵⁰

But this was not the last Rochford heard from the West Indies on the subject of French suspicions of English smuggling there. Only two months later, in June 1767, news arrived of a serious incident at St Domingue, where French Custom House officers had fired on a boat belonging to a British frigate, which they believed they had caught in the act of smuggling. The frigate however returned the fire, and seven of the French boat had been killed or wounded. Choiseul heard the news from Verdi, the Contrôleur-Général, who had exclaimed excitedly, "Nous sommes en Guerre avec les Anglais!" Choiseul did not see the incident in so dreadful a light as this, however, and assured Rochford that he would await reliable reports from the nearest Governor. He was confident it could be adjusted merely as a mésentendu, and Shelburne agreed in reply to Rochford's report that there was no point in taking alarm until the true facts were known.⁵¹

There had already been earlier alarms in 1767 regarding the French in the West Indies which had proved groundless, and Shelburne was anxious not to be taken in again. Late in February, he had drawn Rochford's attention to rumours then current in London that Spain intended ceding her half of Hispaniola to France.

50. SP 78/272, f.230, Rochford to Shelburne, 23 April 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.297, Shelburne to Rochford, 29 May 1767.

51. SP 78/272, f.318, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 June 1767, Secret ; SP 78/273, f.11, Shelburne to Rochford, 3 July 1767.

The third article of Rochford's Separate and Private Instructions had warned him to be alert for any intended cession of territory between France and Spain in the Americas, and Shelburne was sure that such a rumour would not have escaped Rochford's customary vigilance and attention. Rochford had indeed heard the rumour at Paris ; "When I first came here, Nothing else was talked of." But he had not reported it, because he was sure it had no real foundation. He had heard exactly the same rumour while he was at Madrid, and did not report it then because it was such an unthinkable violation of the treaties, and because he was convinced that Spain was "full as averse to the French making any acquisitions in that Part of the World as They are apprehensive of Us." If the rumour had continued, he would have reported it, but "Of late the Idea seems to be quite vanished." Obviously, the rumour had gained strength in London only after fading in the other two capitals. Rochford discredited it entirely ; "if They are insincere They will at least wait for a more favorable as well as advantageous Occasion to unmask Themselves." 52

The only possible support he could find for such a move may itself have stemmed from the rumour, namely, the formation of a partnership between one Bertrand of St Domingue and two French merchants in London, professedly in anticipation of an expanding market in Hispaniola. But when the rumours of a cession revived in London at the end of May, and Shelburne mentioned them to the French and Spanish Ambassadors, Guerchy and Masserano disavowed them very strongly ; Masserano even did so ministerially ; and no more was heard of the idea thereafter. 53

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52. SP 78/272, f.111, Shelburne to Rochford, 27 February 1767, Secret ; *ibid.*, f.141, Rochford to Shelburne, 4 March 1767.
53. SP 78/272, f.151, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 March 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.307, Shelburne to Rochford, 5 June 1767.

Nor did anything become of the incident at St Domingue, but Rochford was not quite finished with the affairs of the West Indies, for at the same interview late in June at which he assured Rochford he had no alarms on that score, Choiseul raised another matter which did cause him alarm. This was a report that Britain had appointed a Governor to the Turks Island and was actually in the process of fortifying the place. This barren island to the north of Hispaniola had been claimed by Britain as long ago as 1672, but was usually uninhabited, apart from seasonal salt-rakers from the Bahamas. The French however regarded the place as a nest of smugglers, and in May 1764 the Governor of St Domingue, d'Estaing, sent an expedition to expel British settlers from the island. This resulted in a minor diplomatic crisis, with Britain protesting strongly, and France claiming she had acted on behalf of Spain. Choiseul was unwilling to pick a quarrel, however, and ordered immediate withdrawal and restitution. He personally disliked d'Estaing, and after a decent interval ordered his recall in 1766. It was generally understood that Turks Island should remain without fortifications or permanent settlement.⁵⁴

Shelburne, however, responded to Rochford's report of Choiseul's alarm in a high and indignant tone, enclosing numerous papers to show that Britain had every right to occupy the island if she wished, especially to protect the salt-rakers against another French descent, that there was no Governor but merely an

54. SP 78/272, f.322, Rochford to Shelburne, 23 June 1767 ; on Turks Island, see Calendar of Home Office Papers, 1760-1765, edited by J. Redington (London, 1878), Nos. 1398 and 1406, for early reports ; see also J. Goebel, The Struggle for the Falkland Islands (1927), p.223, and Sandwich Diplomatic Correspondence, 1763-65, edited by F. Spencer (1961), pp.193, 197, 199-201, 208-214.

Agent, Mr Symmer, and that he had been instructed to avoid any step which might give umbrage to Spain or France. Even with these assurances, Rochford anticipated "a great deal of Altercation" with Choiseul over Turks Island. ⁵⁵

It took Rochford a long while to convince Choiseul that his fears were groundless. In October, he again accused Rochford of having deceived him in his earlier assurances, as he had since received further reports from Rohan, the new French Governor, stating that fortifications were being erected, and all sorts of stores and munitions were being landed there. Rochford could only repeat his previous assurances, but this did not satisfy the French Ministers, who urged Choiseul in Council later that month to ask Rochford for a written statement of Britain's intentions. ⁵⁶

Rochford drafted an unsigned Note of explanation, but wisely did not submit it until he had heard again from Shelburne. Shelburne flatly denied that there were any troops or fortifications on the island, and warned Rochford that Choiseul had no grounds to demand that Britain demonstrate her right to Turks Island ; he was clearly misinformed, and there was no need to submit any written statement. ⁵⁷

Choiseul said no more about Turks Island until the following year, in March 1768, when he again "attacked" Rochford in very strong terms, after receiving a report from Rohan that Britain had set up a sixteen-gun battery on the island which now threatened the Windward Passage to St Domingue. On seeing Rochford's

55. SP 78/273, f.11, Shelburne to Rochford, 3 July 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 9 July 1767.

56. SP 78/273, f.152, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 October 1767, Secret ; *ibid.*, f.174, Rochford to Shelburne, 14 October 1767.

57. SP 78/273, f.176, Shelburne to Rochford, 23 October 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.193, Rochford to Shelburne, 29 October 1767.

astonished look, Choiseul suggested that the British Ministers had changed their minds without informing him, but Shelburne soon put Rochford at ease on this point. There had been no change of policy ; on the contrary, while Mr Symmer had repeatedly appealed for troops and cannon, Shelburne had always refused him, and had done so again as recently as 8 October last. ⁵⁸

This last piece of information enabled Rochford to argue yet more cogently that Choiseul should disregard Rohan's alarmist reports. He pointed out that the latest letter from Rohan was dated in November, long before Shelburne's order of 8 October could have reached Turks Island, so that if Symmer had set up a battery without authority, he should by now have dismantled it. This calmed Choiseul considerably, and he made much of the fact that he had not pressed the Spanish to complain, though they were equally affected by any British establishment on Turks Island. To show that he had avoided advocating a strong line, Choiseul read aloud to Rochford part of his instructions to Count Chatelet, the new French Ambassador in London. Rochford heard nothing therein to account for the truculent tone Chatelet had held with Shelburne ; "I should rather therefore impute it to the Warmth of Count Chatelet's Imagination." ⁵⁹

By April, Choiseul could assure Rochford that his alarm had been "entirely dissipated," and contented himself with the mere warning that France could not look on quietly if Britain ever chose to fortify Turks Island. ⁶⁰ He apparently made no further mention of the matter while Rochford remained at Paris.

58. SP 78/274, f.76, Rochford to Shelburne, 3 March 1768 ; *ibid.*, f.78, Shelburne to Rochford, 11 March 1768.

59. SP 78/274, f.94, Rochford to Shelburne, 17 March 1768, Secret.

60. SP 78/274, f.137, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 April 1768.

In addition to such matters of national importance which occupied Rochford's attention, part of his routine work as British Ambassador was on behalf of private individuals in distress. At his arrival in Paris, an Englishman named Benson had just been convicted of the capital crime of counterfeiting, and condemned to be executed. On the morning of his execution day, however, a message came to the Embassy that Benson claimed to have something "of the utmost consequence" to tell the King's Ambassador. Rochford had not hitherto intervened, for the man's guilt had been clearly established, and there was no question of reprieve for such a grave crime against the Law of Nations. But he sent his private Secretary Higden to hear Benson's story. After several hours, it was obvious that he had nothing to say, and Rochford had to let the execution proceed ; "by all Appearances He seemed only to want to gain Time." ⁶¹

Fortunately no other case in the course of Rochford's embassy was as grim as this one. More typical was his assistance to a young lad named Cookson who had been persuaded to desert from a British frigate and now repented his error. Rochford felt the lad's youth and inexperience deserved some indulgence, and asked Shelburne to intercede for him at the Admiralty, which resulted in his father's pardon and his return to service on a different ship. ⁶²

Apart from such highly idiosyncratic cases as that of Mr Henley who was imprisoned for striking an Irish officer at Versailles, ⁶³ or that of Mr Ker at Bordeaux over the custody of his children whom he had sent to a convent school, ⁶⁴ most of the

61. SP 78/272, f.74, Rochford to Shelburne, 4 February 1767.

62. SP 78/272, fos.43 and 57, Rochford to Shelburne, 22 and 28 January 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.93, Shelburne to Rochford, 20 February 1767.

63. SP 78/272, f.248, Rochford to Shelburne, 30 April 1767.

64. SP 78/271, fos.145, 147, 161, Rochford to Shelburne, 26 November, 4 and 11 December 1766.

cases Rochford had to deal with on behalf of private individuals concerned money, usually the recovery of debts. Not all came through the Secretary of State's office in London ; in April 1767 Philip Thicknesse, trusting in Rochford's known "inclination to make the wretched happy," recommended to him the case of one Miss Fletcher whose intended husband had absconded to France with her whole fortune of £ 1,500.⁶⁵ Yet on the other hand, not all of those recommended by the office received official sanction ; an application by several New York merchants to recover a debt from the French Governor of Cayenne drew the comment from Shelburne that this was not the sort of trade which ought to claim the protection of government, and that Rochford should not exert himself over it!⁶⁶

The most involved and difficult of these cases was that of the Mate of the ship Lively, one Sullivan, who had languished in prison at Bayonne from 1759 to 1763 as hostage for a ransom which had been arranged when his ship was taken by a French corsair soon after setting out on a voyage from Bristol to Jamaica. Having proceeded on its way, however, the Lively had been seized yet again and taken into Martinique, where she was condemned as a prize and the Bayonne ransom agreement declared null and void. The corsair of Bayonne appealed and secured an arrêt in 1761 which ordered the ransom to be paid from the proceeds of the sale of ship and cargo. This was done in 1763, and Sullivan was released. The English owners of the Lively having already received insurance on their

65. The W.S.Lewis /Walpole Library, Farmington, Conn.; autograph letter, Thicknesse to Rochford, 13 April 1767. Thicknesse was the author of a treatise on ciphers and deciphering published in 1772.

66. SP 78/273, f.218, Shelburne to Rochford, 27 November 1767.

loss, were persuaded to transfer the remainder of the proceeds, after the ransom was paid, to the unfortunate Sullivan in recompense for his own losses and long incarceration. But the agents at Martinique who held the money refused to remit it to England, claiming that they had not received the whole amount from the agents of the French prize-court there. Rochford's first enquiries uncovered the fact that part at least had already been remitted, but Sullivan had to petition a second time before orders were finally sent in June 1767 to ensure payment of the remainder.⁶⁷

These routine minor cases helped to relieve the quietness of the Paris Embassy during the idle summer months of 1767, when Rochford's dispatches had little news to report other than the proceedings of the Paris Parlement or the progress of the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain and the mounting pressure for their expulsion from France as well.⁶⁸ Rochford was keenly interested in the affairs of the Parlement as the embodiment of the opposition to Choiseul's policies, but observed that Louis XV had no difficulty breaking their decrees when he disagreed with them.⁶⁹ It has been noted by at least one writer that Rochford was to be one of the earliest among British Secretaries of State to make official comment on the increasing strains visible in French society at this time.⁷⁰

67. SP 78/271, f.145, Rochford to Shelburne, 26 November 1766 ; Nassau Papers, E/28, Choiseul to Rochford, 9 December 1766 ; SP 78/271, f.161, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 December 1766 ; SP 78/272, f.237, Shelburne to Rochford, 28 April 1767, enclosing Sullivan's petition of 15 December 1766 ; *ibid.*, f.305, Rochford to Shelburne, 4 June 1767.

68. SP 78/272, fos.223, 230, Rochford to Shelburne, 16 and 23 April 1767 ; *ibid.*, fos.254, 267, 291, Rochford to Shelburne, 6, 14, and 21 May 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.310, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 June 1767.

69. SP 78/272, f.256, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 May 1767.

70. British Diplomatic Instructions, VII, France, iv, 1745-1789, edited by L.G. Wickham Legg (London, 1934), p.viii in the Preface.

But the tedium was also relieved, as it had been for Rochford years before at Turin, by visitors. Paris naturally had not only a steady stream of English visitors throughout the 'season', but a number of out-of-season residents, for reasons ranging from health and pleasure to political exile. The most notorious of the latter was of course John Wilkes, who was in France again after a brief and fruitless return to London in October 1766. Chatham's refusal of his overtures seemed likely to produce a counterblast now that he was safely back in Paris, and in April 1767 Rochford wrote privately to Chatham warning him that Wilkes planned to publish an attack on his administration, which he believed could be stopped by a word to Choiseul. Chatham's response is not known, but he may have chosen to ignore Rochford's warning, for Wilkes went ahead and published his pamphlet at Paris with its famous reference to Chatham's "flinty and marble heart." 71

Another visitor equally notable though for a very different reason was His Royal Highness the Duke of York, who was travelling incognito through France in the summer of 1767. Rochford had received no warning whatsoever of his visit, and had to arrange at short notice for his presentation at Compiègne as the Earl of Ulster, on 18 July. Rochford attended the Duke at his audience and also took him to dine with Choiseul. 72 But before the end of the year, it was Rochford's private letter of 24 September which brought the first news to England of the death of the Duke of York at Monaco on 17 September. 73

71. Pitt Papers, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan ; Rochford to Chatham, 6 April 1767 ; see also G. Rude, Wilkes and Liberty (Oxford, 1962), p.37.

72. SP 78/273, f.41, Rochford to Shelburne, 23 July 1767.

73. SP 78/273, f.144, Rochford to Shelburne, 24 September 1767, Private (in Rochford's own hand).

Two other visitors in 1767 enjoyed the hospitality of Rochford's household for much longer periods. The first was the noted Hebraist, Dr Benjamin Kennicott, who was attempting to collate the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament. He carried a letter of recommendation from the Earl of Oxford, who recalled with "the utmost pleasure & gratitude" Rochford's kindness to him at Turin, but it is clear from this letter that Rochford had previously promised Kennicott to give him every assistance when he came to Paris. ⁷⁴

The other notable visitor was none other than Rochford's own successor as Ambassador at Madrid, Sir James Gray. Though his appointment had finally been announced in June, Gray's departure was delayed by illness, and the same cause prolonged his stay at Paris throughout August and September. ⁷⁵ Gray was reported dining with the Rochfords by yet another English visitor, an even older acquaintance, whose fame has shone more brightly for posterity than it did in his own time thanks to his incomparable letters ; namely, Horace Walpole. ⁷⁶

Walpole had come to Paris to visit his chief correspondent there, the elderly Marquise du Deffand, and it is in her letters that are found almost our only glimpses of Rochford and Lucy as they appeared in the drawing-room society of the French capital. The Rochfords lived quite near to Madame du Deffand, in the Faubourg St Germain, and they regularly attended her supper-parties

74. The W.S. Lewis/ Walpole Library, Farmington, Conn.; autograph letter, Oxford to Rochford, 25 ?July 1767.

75. SP 78/273, f.75, Porten to Shelburne, 2 September 1767 ; Gray eventually reached Madrid in mid-October.

76. See Walpole's Paris Journal, August-September 1767, in Walpole Correspondence, edited by W.S. Lewis (Yale, 1937-), V, 315-321, *passim*.

at the weekend, usually on Sunday, in the company of such leading society figures as the Comtesse de Boufflers, President Hénault, and the Maréchale-Duchesse de Mirepoix, then the reigning favourite before the appearance of Mme du Barry. ⁷⁷

At first, Mme du Deffand was not greatly impressed by the British Ambassador and his Lady ; she thought Rochford "gai et facile," but Lucy seemed to her merely gossipy and empty-headed. ⁷⁸ As she saw more of them, her opinion improved of Rochford himself ;

"L'ambassadeur et sa femme sont extrêmement polis, et moi en particulier j'ai beaucoup de sujet de m'en louer ; je m'accommode assez bien du mari, il est facile, rompu au grande monde ; pour sa femme, je la trouve un peu amphigourigue . ." ⁷⁹

Her first impression of Lucy, however, remained unchanged ;

". . elle babille beaucoup, et ne dit pas grand'chose." ⁸⁰

Though Mme du Deffand was blind, she insisted that her companions describe her surroundings in minute detail, so that her letters are full of the most vivid descriptions. She has left just such a description of a dinner party which Rochford gave in April 1767 for the Duc and Duchesse de Choiseul, also attended by Mme de Mirepoix, and the Dukes and Duchesses of Gramont, Lauraguais, and de la Vallière. The dinner itself was declared splendid, and the

77. Lettres de Mme du Deffand à Horace Walpole, edited by Mrs Paget Toynbee (London, 1912), I, 184, 194, 205, 224 ; Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1937-), III, 199, 212, 224, 244 ; Deffand to Walpole, 4 and 17 January, 3-6 and 21 February 1767.

78. Toynbee, I, 241, 255 ; Deffand to Walpole, 15 and 27 March 1767 (Yale edition, III, 263, 278).

79. Toynbee, I, 382 ; Deffand to Walpole, 27 January 1768 (Yale edition, IV, 15-16).

80. Toynbee, I, 191 ; Deffand to Walpole, 16 January 1767 (Yale edition, III, 208).

dining room was thought charming ; there was such an abundance of candles that the scene was as bright as daylight, and all was conducted with a "propriété . . à l'anglaise." ⁸¹ The only thing to dampen the evening was that Lucy was unwell, and Mme du Deffand remarked subsequently, that she was "toujours incommodée." ⁸²

Lucy found a good friend however in the widowed Comtesse de Forcalquier, who never ceased to sing her praises of the Rochfords to Mme du Deffand. The old lady may have been a little jealous of Lucy for thus stealing one of her constant companions, and wrote peevishly of Mme de Forcalquier ;

"Toute son ambition est d'être trouvée un bel esprit par votre ambassadeur et votre ambassadrice . . . elle admire tout ce qu'ils disent, et les trouve supérieurs à tout ce qu'elle a jamais connu." ⁸³

The Rochford household in Paris was not without interest for the gossips of Court society, for Mme du Deffand records that it included Rochford's natural daughter, Maria Harrison, now known as Maria Nassau, whom Lucy had adopted as her own. ⁸⁴ Nor was Maria the only young person about the Embassy other than the servants ; Walpole's nephew Thomas was in Paris during 1767, and was a frequent guest at the Rochfords' house. Mme du Deffand noted approvingly that Rochford liked the lad very much, and treated him like a son. ⁸⁵

81. Toynbee, I, 259-260 ; Deffand to Walpole, 12 April 1767 (Yale edition, III, 283).

82. Toynbee, I, 267 ; Deffand to Walpole, 3 May 1767 (Yale edition, III, 291).

83. Toynbee, I, 276, 281 ; Deffand to Walpole, 31 May and 17 June 1767 (Yale edition, III, 303, 309).

84. Toynbee, I, 296 ; Deffand to Walpole, 13 July 1767 (Yale edition, III, 325).

85. Toynbee, I, 262, 267, 283, 289 ; Deffand to Walpole, 26 April, 3 May, 20 and 28 June 1767 (Yale edition, III, 285, 291, 311, 317).

Mme du Deffand also records her gratitude to Rochford for correcting reports of affairs in England given to her by the Swedish Ambassador, Count Creutz ; "Il [Rochford] m'éclaircit toutes les choses que je n'avois point comprises." ⁸⁶ Thereafter she sent to the Rochfords whenever she wanted news of England. ⁸⁷ Earlier Mme du Deffand had noted Lucy's introduction to Creutz with this remark ; "Si elle se laisse entcurer de ces sortes de gens, je ne la verrai guère!" ⁸⁸

Rochford's own opinion of Creutz has already been noted above, and he held similar views on the remainder of the diplomatic corps at Paris, regarding most as Choiseul's creatures. Mme du Deffand remarked perceptively and significantly to Walpole, on hearing Choiseul express a wish to meet him, that neither Choiseul nor Rochford seemed to her to be quite Walpole's sort of people. ⁸⁹ Rochford at least gave Choiseul his due with regard to the diplomatic corps ;

" . . he has the peculiar Talent of gaining the Confidence of those he treats with ; the Foreign Ministers to a man adore him, and if I except the Dutch and Sardinian Ambassadors, and Russian Minister, All the others (I presume I need not except myself) are entirely His Creatures, led and governed by him. M. de Souza, the Portugal Minister, [sic] who I have watched most attentively for some time past, is I am afraid devoted enough to him to listen to any Scheme

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86. Toynbee, I, 239 ; Deffand to Walpole, 13 March 1767 (Yale edition, III, 261).
 87. Toynbee, I, 249 ; Deffand to Walpole, 21 March 1767 (Yale edition, III, 271).
 88. Toynbee, I, 211 ; Deffand to Walpole, 6 February 1767 (Yale edition, III, 229-230).
 89. Toynbee, I, 244 ; Deffand to Walpole, 17 March 1767 (Yale edition, III, 267).

he would think proper to propose ; the same may be said of the Swedish and Danish Ministers ; the others have so insignificant a Part to act, and the greater Part of Them are so avowedly his Spies that it does not require great Penetration to see it . ." 90

Nor was Rochford sparing in his criticism of those of his own countrymen whom he had reason to dislike. Mme du Deffand was startled to hear Rochford's comments on Richmond's first Secretary of Embassy at Paris, David Hume, the noted historian and philosopher. The remarks were made at a dinner at Mme de Caraman's in March 1767, when Rochford was seated at table between Mme du Deffand and the Comtesse de Boufflers, one of Hume's most ardent admirers ;

"Il [Rochford] parla de M. Hume avec le plus grand mépris, sur sa grossièreté, sur son peu d'usage du monde, sur le peu de connaissance qu'il avait des hommes, sur l'incapacité qu'il avait pour les affaires." 91

Though severe, these comments accord with the judgment of a modern authority, who considers that Hume showed competence as Secretary but nothing more, and that though he was probably better at his job than Richmond himself, this did not mean very much! 92 Something of the scorn of the professional for the amateur diplomat might be deduced from Rochford's comments. 93

The Paris Embassy was certainly regarded by contemporaries as the most important post in the British diplomatic service, and throughout the eighteenth century this attracted the grandest

90. SP 78/272, f.256, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 May 1767, Secret and Confidential.

91. Toynbee, I, 232 ; Deffand to Walpole, 5 March 1767 (Yale edition, III, 253).

92. J.Y.T. Greig, David Hume (London, 1934), pp.324-5.

93. See on this point D.B. Horn, British Diplomatic Service, 1689-1789 (Oxford, 1961), pp.12-14

amateurs of all, the great noblemen who scorned any lesser diplomatic appointment, yet spent as little time as possible at their post, leaving the routine work to their Secretary of Embassy.⁹⁴ Rochford at least attended to the routine work, as has been seen above, and when he did apply for leave it was for a specific reason and a suitably short period. But his first leave from Paris is of particular interest also for the light it sheds on his hopes for a place in the Ministry at home.

Rochford first applied for leave in May, when the last ripples of the Manila Ransom - Falkland Islands affair had long since died away. He suggested leaving early in June ;

" . . as I have nothing but a private Affair to settle in England, and some Papers to get from my House in the Country, I shall at farthest be back by the fifteenth of July."

Not only would July be "the idlest Time that I can possibly be absent," but Rochford was anxious not to miss going with the French Court to Compiègne, for this was the best opportunity of the year for gossip and intrigue, and for watching the Ministers more closely. ⁹⁵

The King readily granted Rochford his leave, but Shelburne recommended Rochford to wait until Guerchy had also left London for his usual summer leave, for while Porten was still in England it would be dangerous to leave the Paris Embassy unattended, in case anything serious arose unexpectedly. This was reasonable, and

94. D.B. Horn, Great Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1967), pp.39-40.

95. SP 78/272, f.307, Shelburne to Rochford, 5 June 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.310, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 June 1767 ; Rochford's letter of 28 May, which Shelburne acknowledges and summarizes, does not appear either in SP 78 or in the Shelburne Papers.

Rochford was content to have some of his papers brought over by the messenger, to be signed by himself and Lucy before witnesses at the Embassy. The papers were presumably those relating to Lucy's annuity or yearly rent-charge of £ 1,500, and the first mortgage which Rochford was to raise on the St Osyth estate, which bear the dates 9 and 10 July 1767.⁹⁶ As the witnesses include among others both Rochford's secretaries, Porten and Higden, it is reasonable to assume that the papers were signed in Paris after Porten's return there at the end of June, and before Rochford's departure on leave, for Lucy remained in France throughout.⁹⁷

Porten's return was awaited by Rochford in a fever of anticipation, according to Mme du Deffand, and little wonder, for there were rumours abroad both in London and in Paris, that Rochford was being recalled to replace Conway as Secretary of State. That some change in the Chatham Administration was not only desirable but necessary had been apparent for some time. As early as March, Rochford had been warned by his old friend Sandwich of an imminent change in the Ministry ;

" . . my opinion is that Ld Chatham's power is very near its end. There is a decided Majority against him in the House of Commons, where he has not carry'd any one Point this Session . . . I know you are too zealous a Servant of the Crown, not to be affected with so Melancholy an Account of His Majesty's Administration . . ." ⁹⁸

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96. Essex Record Office, D/DCr.T.1 ; Mortgage for £ 12,000, dated 9 July 1767, Earl and Countess of Rochford to Peter Holford, Esq.; Release for securing an Annuity to the Countess of Rochford, dated 10 July 1767, Earl of Rochford to Edward Young, Esq.(Lucy's brother?).
97. Toynbee, I, 304 ; Deffand to Walpole, 3 August 1767 (Yale edition, III, 333).
98. Pitt Papers, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan ; autograph letter, Sandwich to Rochford, 22 March 1767.

Amazingly, the Ministry dragged on. Chatham took no active part in politics after March 1767, and with the failure of negotiations to bring in Rockingham's friends in July, Conway decided he would resign, and was persuaded only with difficulty to retain the Seals without salary for the meantime.⁹⁹ The result of these agonizing uncertainties was described by the Prussian Minister, Maltzan ;

"Le département du Nord est actuellement depuis six semaines sans secrétaire d'Etat, et le comte de Shelburne qui devrait y suppléer, traite les affaires avec une confusion et une nonchalance qui désolent tous ceux qui ont à faire avec lui ; soit paresse, il ne fait presque rien, et n'entre pas même en discussion sur les affaires qu'on lui propose." ¹⁰⁰

But throughout June, there seemed every chance that Rochford might be called upon to join the Ministry, and Mme du Deffand rightly identified this as the cause of Rochford's impatience for Porten's return ;

". . j'imagine que votre ministre ici [Rochford] a des grands projets et qu'il avait ces jours passés de grandes espérances . . . il était si occupé, si troublé, que je lui dis en riant que j'enverrais ce matin lui en demander des nouvelles . ." ¹⁰¹

There was no news that day, and when Mme du Deffand met Lucy, she said could not tell what would happen. But Mme du Deffand then heard of a significant remark which Lucy had made the night before to Mme de Jonzac, namely, that Rochford did not really want

99. Brooke, The Chatham Administration (1956), pp.xiii, 200-202.

100. Politische Correspondenz Friedrich's des Grossen, edited by Droysen, Dunker, Kosen, et.al. (Berlin, 1879-1939), XXVI, 221, n.4, Maltzan to Frederick II, 31 July 1767.

101. Toynbee, I, 285 ; Deffand to Walpole, 23 June 1767 (Yale edition, III, 313).

a place in the ministry until it acquired greater stability ("consistance").¹⁰² This was also in accord with the impression she had formed several months before about Rochford ;

" Je me suis bien aperçue qu'il n'est pas neutre, mais qu'il est anti-Pitt." ¹⁰³

Porten's return to Paris on 28 June brought, however, only the news that Conway had been persuaded to stay on, and Shelburne's repeated orders that Rochford should remain in Paris until Guerchy had returned to France.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, rumours continued throughout July, to the effect that Rochford was being recalled to replace Conway. The London Chronicle twice reported this as reliable news, before finally contradicting the rumours with the statement that Rochford was returning only briefly on private business.¹⁰⁵ The French Court moved to Compiègne in mid-July, and the Rochfords followed soon after. Guerchy at last arrived towards the end of the month, and Rochford found that he had been "extremely ill," and was by all accounts "not quite satisfied" with the reception he had met at Court.¹⁰⁶

Rochford finally set off for London on 3 August, Lucy having decided to remain at Compiègne with Mme de Forcalquier.¹⁰⁷ He travelled by way of Dunkirk, as has been noted above, intending to arrive in London about 10 August, but no details are known of

102. Toynbee, I, 287 ; Deffand to Walpole, 23 June 1767, a P.S. of the following morning (Yale edition, III, 315).

103. Toynbee, I, 233 ; Deffand to Walpole, 8 March 1767 (Yale edition, III, 254).

104. SP 78/273, f.20, Rochford to Shelburne, 2 July 1767.

105. London Chronicle, XXII (1767), 50, 56, 162 ; quoted in Walpole Correspondence, edited by W.S. Lewis (Yale, 1937-), III, 314-5.

106. SP 78/273, fols.39 and 49, Rochford to Shelburne, 16 and 30 July 1767.

107. Toynbee, I, 304 ; Deffand to Walpole, 3 August 1767 (Yale edition, III, 333).

his stay in England. It was clear, however, that there was no immediate place for him in the Ministry, whatever his views on its stability, and he returned to Paris on 22 September, faced with the prospect of at least another year there.¹⁰⁸

His disappointment had a price, however, as Shelburne discovered in a private letter of 29 October ;

"I am sorry to say that unless the King is so good as to consider my services by restoring to me the pension that was taken from me, that it is impossible for me to remain here. I do not mean this by way of a threat, but must entreat your Lordship to represent it in its true light . . ."

Rochford claimed to have discussed the matter thoroughly with Grafton, and reminded Shelburne that he had spoken of it to the King before leaving London. The consideration which rankled most was that Gray had been allowed to keep his pension in addition to the Madrid Embassy, when it was clear that his health would prevent him from exerting half the effort Rochford had at that post.¹⁰⁹

The scarcely-veiled threat had its effect ; but the pension, for all its £ 2,000 a year, was surely of little comfort to Rochford in January 1768, when Conway finally did resign only to be replaced by the dissolute Weymouth.¹¹⁰ Once again it seemed that diplomacy was the only alternative to the wilderness for one who scorned party connexions.

108. SP 78/273, f.138, Porten to Shelburne, 23 September 1767.

109. The W.S.Lewis / Walpole Library, Farmington, Conn.; autograph letter, Rochford to Shelburne, 29 October 1767, Private.

110. Toynbee, I, 356 ; Deffand to Walpole, 9 December 1767 (Yale edition, III, 392) ; Rochford told Deffand it was only his threat of quitting which got him the pension.

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The Later Phase at Paris
and the Crisis over Corsica, 1768.

By comparison with his first hectic nine months at Paris, the second half of Rochford's Embassy after his return from leave in September 1767 was remarkably quiet. His busiest month was perhaps November, when a number of separate issues demanded his attention, but the idleness of the first part of 1768, before the gathering storm over the French annexation of Corsica, is suggested very distinctly by a remark he made late in January 1768 ;

"There has not happened a single Occurrence here for some time past, worth troubling Your Lordship with ; I hope therefore I shall not be thought defective either in My Duty or My Diligence in writing such short Dispatches." ¹

For the most part, Rochford's work on his return to Paris seemed to consist in refuting inaccurate or alarmist reports which had given concern to the British Ministers, or in confirming judgments which he had earlier formed regarding French policies towards Spain and Austria.

The first alarming rumour, of which Shelburne made mention in October 1767, concerned a suspected negotiation between France and Hesse-Cassel, for a large body of troops to enter French service. This came from a usually reliable source, and was all the more puzzling and disquieting in view of Britain's support of the

1. SP 78/274, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 28 January 1768.

Landgrave in his futile attempts to recover some captured cannon taken by the French at Cassel in the Seven Years' War.² Rochford agreed that this seemed a most unusual and unlikely step, and though he used as Shelburne instructed "all possible Means," he could find nothing to support the rumour. He suggested, however, a likely explanation ; there had been proposals afoot to exempt the subjects of certain German states from the French droit d'aubaine, since the exemption granted to Vienna late in 1766, and Hesse-Cassel was one of the states involved. That this seemed the probable explanation of the rumour was confirmed in March 1768 with the publication of letters patent regarding the droit d'aubaine including Hesse-Cassel in the list of exemptions, and nothing more was heard of the troop negotiations.³

The second rumour was a great deal more alarming, though as it turned out, equally unfounded. Shelburne had received reports suggesting the preparation of an invasion force at Brest ; there was a flurry of ship-repairing, and an English vessel close inshore observed large bodies of troops on the march. Rochford knew that Choiseul was directing much effort into the improvement of the French fleet, and earlier in 1767 had reported an increase of 7 million livres in the budget for the Navy,⁴ but his usual sources of intelligence had heard of no unusual activity at Brest. In such an important matter, however, it was necessary to make sure ; Rochford immediately "sent a Person thither to procure me as good an Account as possibly

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2. These attempts were revived by Rochford in April 1768, with as little success ; SP 78/274, f.201, Shelburne to Rochford, 22 April 1768 ; *ibid.*, f.218, Rochford to Shelburne, 28 April 1768.
 3. SP 78/273, f.187, Shelburne to Rochford, 30 October 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.204, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 November 1767, Secret ; SP 78/274, f.68, Rochford to Shelburne, 3 March 1768.
 4. SP 78/272, f.267, Rochford to Shelburne, 14 May 1767.

he can of what is doing there." This person, Rochford assured Shelburne, was "extremely proper for the Business, and one I can depend upon." Knowing how extremely watchful the French were at all their major ports, Rochford advised his agent to take elaborate precautions in travelling to Brest, so as not to cause suspicion. But his man did remarkably well, even to securing letters of recommendation which enabled him to wander at his ease throughout the naval dockyard. On his return to Paris he handed Rochford a detailed report, including a list of the ships then at Brest, and assured Rochford there was no exceptional activity. Their magazines he had observed to be poorly furnished, and there were no large bodies of troops stationed anywhere nearby. Rochford concluded that the troops seen marching were merely changing to winter quarters, as many regiments had been on the move across France in the previous month. ⁵

Rochford had another good reason for doubting whether Choiseul was yet quite ready to embark on any provocative action ;

"It is almost incredible the bad State the French Finances are in, nor is it obvious to Those who are best informed, what Resources They can find to extricate Themselves."

This observation was prompted by a recent Edict ennobling a number of les gros Commerçants, including two prominent mercers of Paris, to whom it was rumoured the Court owed some 300,000 livres apiece. Cancelling debts by ennoblement was not a new device, but this Edict

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5. SP 78/273, f.187, Shelburne to Rochford, 30 October 1767, Secret ; *ibid.*, f.195, Rochford to Shelburne, 4 November 1767 ; *ibid.*, f.204, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 November 1767, Secret ; *ibid.*, f.258, Rochford to Shelburne, 3 December 1767 ; f.260 gives the list of warships at Brest. There were now 30 ships of the line, where there had been 21 in the previous May, but "None of the above ships have their masts or are They preparing in the least to be fitted out." Compare SP 78/272, f.299, Rochford to Shelburne, 28 May 1767. Rochford makes no comment on the undoubted steady increase in the number of capital ships under Choiseul's building programme.

was widely regarded as "an Act of Despair," and "a most extraordinary Resource." Rochford drew from this the most obvious conclusion ;

"Whilst their Finances are in this Way it is not natural to conclude that They have any hostile Views."

To this he added another reflection, which indicates his attention to events in Eastern Europe as well ;

" . . their looking on so very quietly on what is passing in Poland (which They would most likely not do, if They were in a more flourishing Condition) is, I think, some Proof of their meaning to be quiet at this Period." ⁶

Shelburne had only just reminded Rochford to keep alert for any signs of overt or covert interference in Polish affairs by either the French or Austrian Courts, as "the least Prospect of Foreign Assistance might kindle a great Flame in that Country." ⁷ Britain was courting a Russian alliance, and could not help but approve Russia's policy of religious toleration in what was fast becoming her puppet kingdom. But the risk of Austrian interference on behalf of the Polish Roman Catholics seemed to increase as Russia protected and encouraged the claims of the Dissident minorities. ⁸

Towards the end of November, Rochford drew Choiseul into a discussion of the Polish situation, by remarking that "as a Well-wisher" to continued harmony between Britain and France, he was glad to find that the affairs of that unhappy country were "not likely to draw Europe in the Scrape." Choiseul agreed that it was too far off to affect them, though the Court of Vienna was more closely

6. SP 78/273, f.214, Rochford to Shelburne, 19 November 1767, Secret.

7. SP 78/273, f.199, Shelburne to Rochford, 13 November 1767.

8. See W.F. Reddaway, "Great Britain and Poland, 1762-1772," Cambridge Historical Journal, IV (1932-34), pp.223-262, especially pp.243-5, for developments in 1767.

concerned. Even if the situation there worsened, Choiseul assured Rochford he would do his utmost to prevent any Austrian intervention, as this would infallibly spark off a European war. In his last talk with Merci, the Austrian Ambassador, Choiseul had found him quiet enough on this issue, though he thought Russia's conduct in Poland "rather violent and extraordinary." Choiseul concluded with the arch comment "that he was much more taken up with what we were doing in America than whatever was carrying on in Poland." ⁹

In January, Rochford was a little anxious when Fuentes and Merci had an unusually long conference with Choiseul, after which Fuentes came out and left Merci alone with Choiseul another half hour ; "this joint Conference in the Face of all the Foreign Ministers was rather irregular." But the general consensus of opinion was that this conference concerned the proposed marriage of the King of Naples to an Austrian Archduchess. This was presumably what had given rise to the rumours of a marriage alliance being negotiated between France and Austria, which Shelburne had asked Rochford to investigate. This had led Rochford to uncover yet another scheme of political marriages which interested him personally ; he heard that Louis XV had spoken of a double marriage between the French Royal Family and the two elder children of the Duke of Savoy, both of whom had been born while Rochford was Envoy at Turin. He had mentioned this privately to the Sardinian Ambassador, who at first said he knew nothing whatever of it ; then, rather than mislead, he added with a smile that it was not at all improbable! ¹⁰

9. SP 78/273, f.251, Rochford to Shelburne, 25 November 1767, Separate.

10. SP 78/273, f.216, Shelburne to Rochford, 27 November 1767, Secret ; SP 78/274, f.22, Rochford to Shelburne, 22 January 1768.

Nevertheless, it did not need a marriage alliance to remind Rochford of the close relationship between the Courts of Vienna and Versailles ; "their Union seems if possible to encrease and gather dayly more Solidity." Rochford was unlikely hereafter to entertain nostalgic notions of reviving the 'Old System' of an alliance between Britain and Austria, which many British politicians continued to dream of.¹¹ So formidable an alliance, especially alongside France's connexion with Spain under the Family Compact, might not be thought to have much anxiety about entering another war ; yet Rochford remained convinced that

"This Court have not only at present no hostile Views, but would on the contrary do Every Thing in its Power to turn aside any Event that should tend that Way ; In the frequent Conferences I have with the Duke of Choiseul I can plainly see his Aversion to Every Thing that would be likely to interrupt the Peace. His Apprehensions of some wrongheaded Conduct in the Court of Spain frequently alarm him . . . "

Spain was indeed Rochford's touchstone in assessing Choiseul's attitude towards the peace. The impressions he had gathered at Madrid of the Spanish King and his Ministers, and their dependence on French assistance in case of hostilities whatever their independent peacetime poses, continued to suggest to him that Choiseul could exert a significant restraining influence at a time of crisis. Even further, Rochford still thought that if Britain had seriously persisted with the Manila Ransom demand, Choiseul would finally have prevailed on Spain to come into some acceptable arrangement.¹²

11. See the discussion in M. Roberts, Splendid Isolation, 1763-1780 (Reading, 1970), pp.20, 38.

12. SP 78/274, f.86, Rochford to Shelburne, 10 March 1768, Secret.

The failure of the Manila Ransom demand was of course something of a personal sore point for Rochford, yet his opinion of Choiseul's influence with the Spanish ministers had received recent support in the aftermath of a clash between Spanish and Portuguese forces in South America. In June 1767 several Spanish forts north of Rio Grande (between modern Uruguay and Brazil) were attacked by the Portuguese, though unsuccessfully, and lives were lost on both sides. The news of this incident reached Europe in September, and Shelburne asked Rochford for the French reaction late in October. ¹³

At first, Rochford was inclined to think from his own observations that nothing serious would result, and that Spain and Portugal were not on such bad terms over Brazil as was commonly supposed. He was sure that France was endeavouring to bring about a reconciliation, with a view to weaning Portugal away from her pro-British stance, after hearing what instructions Choiseul had given to the French Minister at Lisbon to encourage the substitution of French for British linens and woollen goods. And he had always mistrusted the close connexion between Souza and Choiseul at Paris, more so since he had heard from a reliable source that Souza's messengers regularly paused a day or two at Madrid on their way to Paris. ¹⁴

These conjectures were largely confirmed by Souza himself, in a rare confidential aside to Rochford a week later. The report of the incident was true, but neither Court condoned its officers' action,

13. SP 78/273, f.187, Shelburne to Rochford, 30 October 1767, Secret ; see also V.L. Brown, Studies in the History of Spain in the second half of the Eighteenth Century (Northampton, Mass., 1930), pp.69-72.

14. SP 78/273, f.204, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 November 1767, Secret.

and a satisfaction would easily be arranged. This was in accord with the cordiality Rochford had observed of late between Madrid and Lisbon, but Souza went on to explain the rumours about a negotiation afoot between the two Courts ; Spain had been "extremely reasonable," and they were negotiating "amicably" over how best to expel the Jesuits from South America, Rochford suggested that France would surely approve of this, and Souza let slip that they did, and moreover, "avoit donné des bons Conseils." ¹⁵

The frequent exchange of couriers to and from Madrid, and the close connexion between Fuentes and Souza at Paris persisted for some time, but Shelburne was satisfied that Rochford had uncovered the most probable explanation, and gave no heed to the continuing rumours in London that Portugal was about to join the Family Compact. As the affair of the Jesuits faded, Portugal drifted back to her old pro-British stance, and an attempt by France to secure a secret defensive alliance with Portugal late in 1768 came to nothing. ¹⁶

By January 1768, all was quiet for Rochford at Paris, as was noted at the beginning of this chapter. Nor was there much to occupy him in the next few months. The French Queen's illness, the departure of Châtelet, the new French Ambassador to England, and a visit from Rochford's former Chaplain, de Visme, on his way home from Madrid, ¹⁷ received perhaps undue prominence in Rochford's

15. SP 78/273, f.204, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 November 1767, Secret.

16. SP 78/273, f.214, Rochford to Shelburne, 19 November 1767, Secret ; *ibid.*, f.208, Shelburne to Rochford, 20 November 1767 ; V.L. Brown, *Studies*, pp.72-74

17. SP 78/273, f.267, Rochford to Shelburne, 16 December 1767 ; SP 78/274, fos.18 and 20, Rochford to Shelburne, 6 and 13 January 1768. The French Queen, Maria Leszczinska, finally died on 24 June 1768 ; see SP 78/275, f.102, Rochford to Shelburne, 26 June 1768.

dispatches from the paucity of other news. The only real business Rochford performed in January 1768 was to secure the release of three Englishmen imprisoned at Le Havre for smuggling tobacco. Though their boat and cargo had been confiscated, they faced being sent to the galleys if they did not also pay a heavy fine. Rochford had been arguing against this fine for almost a year, and only now did Choiseul relent and send orders for the fine to be dropped. ¹⁸

February was almost as quiet, but for the publication of an old regulation which required foreign travellers in France to have a passport from the French Ministers as well as their own Ambassador at Paris. As a result, several English travellers had been detained at Calais, even though they had Rochford's pass. Choiseul explained that the regulation had been revived without prior publicity in the Gazettes solely on account of the insulting behaviour of the Russian Minister, Galitzin, in going away without leave-taking or passports. Rochford pointed out that many British subjects coming to France on commercial business never came to Paris at all. Choiseul accordingly sent orders to the seaports that such persons did not require their Ambassador's pass, but were merely to register with the principal Officer of the place where they were going. ¹⁹

After this matter was settled, March looked like being another quiet month, enlivened briefly by the arrival of a bulky package from Sir William Hamilton, the British Envoy at Naples. This contained a presentation copy of the first volume of what was

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18. SP 78/274, f.35, Rochford to Shelburne, 28 January 1768 ; see also SP 78/272, f.123, Rochford to Shelburne, 4 March 1767, and SP 78/273, f.264, Rochford to Shelburne, 10 December 1767.
 19. SP 78/274, fos.65, 68, and 84, Rochford to Shelburne, 25 February, 3 and 10 March 1768.

to become famous as Hamilton's Greek and Roman Antiquities, which he was then being published under a pseudonym at Naples. Though this copy was intended for George III, Hamilton begged Rochford to glance over it before sending it on, as he would be glad of his comments. Unfortunately, Rochford's comments do not appear to have survived. ²⁰

But no sooner had Rochford sent this volume on to London, than there burst out a great clamour in Paris over the hijacking of a French sloop by ten shipwrecked English sailors who were being brought from Cherbourg to Le Havre on the first stage of their journey home. The facts were soon revealed. It was a very small vessel, manned only by two men and a boy, whom the sailors had prevailed upon to sail direct to Portsmouth, so anxious were they to get home. The sloop had since returned safely to France, but its Master was making loud noises in hope of gaining compensation. Rochford smoothed the whole affair by sending to his correspondent at Rouen, to pay the Master what he asked, and by thanking the authorities at Cherbourg for facilitating the return of the castaways! Choiseul merely grumbled at the lack of reciprocity shown in similar cases of French vessels shipwrecked on British shores. ²¹

The remainder of Rochford's Paris Embassy was to be dominated to the exclusion of almost all other business by the crisis over the French annexation of Corsica, but a few remaining points of interest may briefly be summarized before considering

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20. Lacaita-Shelburne Papers, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan ; Rochford to Shelburne, 24 March 1768, Private. Hamilton's covering letter to Rochford of 16 February 1768 is now in the W.S. Lewis / Walpole Library at Farmington, Conn.
21. SP 78/274, f.117, Shelburne to Rochford, 1 April 1768 ; *ibid.*, fos.105 and 137, Rochford to Shelburne, 24 March and 7 April 1768.

this important climacteric in Rochford's career. These remaining points all concerned the possibility of a French 'revanche' against England.

Early in March, Rochford warned Shelburne of one d'Angeul who was then "much connected" with London society ; this man, he had found, was employed by Choiscul in Northern Europe as "honnête espion," and was thought to be heading for Ireland where he would certainly need watching.²² He was only the first of several, including Irish and Jacobite officers in French service who seemed interested in Ireland at this time ; when Rochford applied for a passport on behalf of yet another French officer, Shelburne remarked that the "unusual Resort of French Officers to Ireland" was surely with no good intent.²³

Yet Rochford's most notable piece of intelligence in the following month pointed to Canada rather than Ireland. His Secret and Confidential letter of 14 April, enclosing the paper supplied by his informant, appears to have been lost, and few details are given in the two extant letters about this "Design on Canada." Shelburne merely conveyed the King's approbation of Rochford's "Vigilance and Attention," assuring him that his expenses in getting this intelligence would be reimbursed. But Rochford's further letter, giving details of his informant's contacts, added a genuine piece of news the significance of which Rochford does not remark upon, namely that merchant vessels at certain French ports had recently been surveyed and registered, to be ready whenever demanded.²⁴

22. SP 78/274, f.119, Rochford to Shelburne, 3 March 1768, Secret.

23. SP 78/275, f.1, Shelburne to Rochford, 6 May 1768, Secret.

24. SP 78/275, f.1, Shelburne to Rochford, 6 May 1768, Secret (copy in Shelburne Papers, Vol.161, f.27) ; Shelburne Papers, Vol.38, Pt.II, f.66, Rochford to Shelburne, 25 May 1768, Secret & Private.

This was presumably part of the survey which Choiseul had ordered to be made in 1767 of the condition, capacity, and local shipping of many smaller ports in Northern France, as part of his planning for the 'revanche' against England. As Rochford's correspondents were only in a few of the major ports, it is not surprising that he was unaware of this survey, just as the British Government was unaware of the espionage then being carried out by the Jacobite French officer, Colonel Grant of Blairfindy, along the south coast of England. ²⁵

Part of Choiseul's survey involved the taking of soundings on parts of the French channel coast, and this at least did not escape Rochford's notice ; he was even given the name of one of the engineers employed in this work, one Aubert, who had since been reported in London. The soundings were also noticed by an English traveller who sent his own report to Shelburne, adding that France was thought to be hoarding coin and importing unusually large shipments of lead, which suggested hostile preparations. But Rochford's correspondent at Rouen, who was well-informed of what passed in the seaports, declared that any exceptional importation of lead would be sure to be reported to him, and he had heard nothing as yet. As for the hoarding of specie, Rochford was inclined to doubt it ; "they are too much distressed to think of hoarding." ²⁶

The touchiness of French coastal authorities at this time was demonstrated shortly after, in June, with the arrest at Vannes of a British Naval Officer, one Captain Saxton, who had been arrested whilst fishing from a small boat, on suspicion of taking

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25. M.C. Morison, "The Duc de Choiseul and the invasion of England, 1768-1770," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 3rd series, IV (1910), especially pp.86-87.
26. SP 78/274, f.145, Shelburne to Rochford, 15 April 1768, Secret ; *ibid.*, f.216, Rochford to Shelburne, 28 April 1768, Secret.

soundings. When Rochford applied for his release, Choiseul at first gave two very short and frosty replies, and finally agreed to Saxton's release only on condition that he travel inland on his return to Paris, where Rochford had first given him his passport. ²⁷

Rochford took note of all these signs, but refused to take alarm, adhering firmly to the opinion he had expressed to Shelburne in April ;

"They prepare themselves as fast as They conveniently can, but I am still of Opinion it will be a great while before They are ready ; although in that Case They may deceive themselves." ²⁸

Rochford fully expected that he would be able to spend the coming summer at St Osyth, so little prospect did he see of any hostile action against England. ²⁹ In this he was right in a narrow technical sense ; but the object to which Choiseul's attention was diverted proved capable of inflicting a severe diplomatic defeat upon Britain that very summer, confirming Choiseul's surmise that France could prepare herself in good time while the British Ministry remained too weak and divided to place any serious obstacle in her way.

Whilst at Turin before the Seven Years' War, Rochford had witnessed a phase of French withdrawal from Corsica, after expensive and fruitless efforts to subjugate the rebellious islanders for her ally, the Republic of Genoa. ³⁰ But the onset of war soon after

27. SP 78/275, f.140, Rochford to Shelburne, 11 July 1768.

28. SP 78/274, f.216, Rochford to Shelburne, 28 April 1768, Secret.

29. The Chelmsford and Colchester Chronicle for 4 March 1768 reported preparations already making at St Osyth in anticipation of Rochford's return (I owe this item to Mr Kenneth Walker, of Romford, Essex).

30. See above, Chapter 5, pp.134-138.

Rochford's departure from Turin, soon had French troops back on the island ; the First Treaty of Compiègne between France and Genoa in 1756 increased the French subsidies to the Republic. After the war, France sought a more permanent solution to the Corsican question, and Choiseul opened secret negotiations with Paoli, the insurgent leader, over a plan to make Corsica a French protectorate, to the exclusion of Genoa. But word leaked out, and the transaction was hastily disavowed. Choiseul returned to the negotiation called for by Genoa, and the result was the Second Treaty of Compiègne (6 August 1764), by which French troops were to guard certain key places on the island for the next four years. ³¹

This breathing space was intended as an opportunity to work out a final solution, and while Genoa offered a variety of proposals to the Corsicans, each to be rejected, Choiseul resumed his secret correspondence with Paoli. But this approach also failed, and by the end of 1766, the insurgents had decided to renew guerilla warfare against Genoa and her powerful ally. The Republic became increasingly anxious as the French troops began their planned withdrawal in the course of 1767. ³²

Rochford's interest in Corsican affairs had been rekindled on his appointment to Paris, and he clearly kept himself informed

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31. Thadd E. Hall, "France and the Eighteenth Century Corsican Question" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1966), pp.139-146 ; though there is a considerable literature in French (see Louis Villat, La Corse de 1768 à 1789 ; Thèse complémentaire ; Essai de bibliographie critique (Besançon, 1924), for the range of work), no comprehensive study has yet appeared in English concerning the French acquisition of Corsica. There is a brief but useful account in J.F. Ramsey, Anglo-French Relations, 1763-1770, pp.183-191, and some of the correspondence was published in Fitzmaurice's Life of Shelburne (1876), II, 119-124, 129-140, but the most detailed studies remain unpublished, notably, M.S. Anderson, "British Diplomatic Relations with the Mediterranean, 1763-1778" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh, 1951), Hall (cited above), and R.E. Abarca, "Bourbon 'revanche' against England . . . 1763-1770" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Notre Dame, 1965). Of these, only Abarca depicts Rochford's role in detail.
32. Hall, pp.156-176 ; Ramsey, pp.183-185 ; Anderson, pp.229-231.

of developments there, reporting in June 1767 details of the latest offer made by Genoa to the Corsican leaders. One of the terms would have given half the strong places to the Corsicans, but another gave France one strong place, as a guarantee of the agreement. This offer, like the others, was spurned by the islanders, but Rochford's comment was to prove strangely prophetic ;

"The French Ministry still continue interfering greatly in the Affairs of Corsica . . . It is very easy, in my Opinion, to discern that the French mean nothing but their own Advantage in this, and to secure to Themselves a Post and Place of Security in that Island for their future Views." ³³

He had recognized whilst at Turin the strategic value of Corsica for France, and had declared that its possession by Britain's great rival would be of the utmost importance in time of war. Even then, there had been recurrent rumours that France planned to acquire Corsica for herself. ³⁴ But Corsica aroused little interest in British Government circles ; the fate of the island was a matter for apathy and indifference at London, even though the French constantly feared some form of British intervention there during the Seven Years' War. ³⁵

The evacuation of French troops from the island continued during 1767, while large numbers of Jesuits were arriving in search of refuge after their expulsion from Spain and Parma. Genoa's frantic anxiety reached new heights of desperation that summer, and while Rochford was on leave in August and September, his Secretary, Porten,

33. SP 78/272, f.314, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 June 1767.

34. See above, Chapter 5, p.135.

35. Anderson, pp.233-234, convincingly establishes this point, and argues that the ignorance of British Ministers regarding Corsica prevented the formulation of any coherent policy on the subject.

noted frequent exchanges between Choiseul and Sorba, the Genoese Minister at Paris. It was generally thought that these talks were to do with the Jesuits on Corsica,³⁶ but in fact, they were to decide a much more important matter. In May, Genoa had made the first tentative suggestions that she might cede Corsica to another power under certain conditions. In June and July, Choiseul had decided that if any power were to have Corsica, that power must be France, but on France's terms. The first specific proposal for a cession was rejected by Choiseul, who then proposed a counter-project. These highly secret exchanges occupied the latter months of 1767, and were still not completely settled at the start of 1768, though it seemed likely that Genoa would finally accept Choiseul's terms.³⁷

It was impossible now to believe that these exchanges still concerned the Jesuits on Corsica, and speculation began to mount at Genoa and Paris as to their real purpose. At last, in March, a rumour spread at Paris that French troops were to be sent back to Corsica, which suggested that a new Convention was being formed between France and Genoa to take effect from the expiry of the 1764 agreement. Choiseul went out of his way to reassure Rochford that "as yet Nothing was fixed." Yet Rochford thought he could perceive "an Uneasiness in him that this had been so much talked of," and wondered whether something bigger than the mere renewal of the 1764 Convention was in the wind :

"If these Troops are sent to Corsica, and the Convention is renewed, it is so directly opposite to what the Duke of Choiseul has allways declared, that I should be inclined to think They had some more distant View . . ."

36. SP 78/273, fos.65, 67, 69, 73, 87, Porten to Shelburne, 13, 20, 21, 27 August 1767 ; and 9 September 1767.

37. Hall, pp.176-177 ; Ramsey, pp.185-6.

Once people were used to seeing troops collected each year to replace those on duty in Corsica, France could begin to build up her forces there without causing any alarm, if she had some "distant View" in mind. Rochford thought this might be their plan for two or three years hence ; "for if They think of Any Thing for the present, They are madder I must own than I believe them to be." ³⁸

Mad or not, however, the acquisition of Corsica was very much a present view for Choiseul, and Shelburne was being warned of this from at least two sources in March and April. Horace Mann at Florence twice reported strong rumours that Genoa was about to cede Corsica to France, and Consul Hollford at Genoa (a worthy successor to Rochford's old friend Birtles) was even able to send a sketch of the terms under discussion. ³⁹ But Shelburne remained stubbornly disbelieving that Choiseul could contemplate such a step in time of peace. He gently sounded Châtelet about the troops rumoured to be sent to Corsica, and was easily assured that the rumours were grossly exaggerated and nothing had yet been decided. ⁴⁰ Shelburne informed Rochford of the reports from Mann, and admitted that if true this would prove "a Matter of serious Consideration." But he gave no advice or guidance for Rochford to follow, other than asking him to be alert to any further details. ⁴¹ No such advice could be given, for no policy on Corsica other than indifference existed in London at this time. ⁴²

38. SP 78/274, f.119, Rochford to Shelburne, 3 March 1768, Secret.

39. Anderson, pp.235-236, citing SP 98/73 for Mann to Shelburne, 26 March and 23 April 1768, and Hollford to Shelburne, 9 April 1768. Hollford had suggested that the "alienation" of the whole island was being mooted in September 1767.

40. SP 78/274, f.123, Shelburne to Rochford, 8 April 1768.

41. AECF Angleterre, 478, f.29, Châtelet to Choiseul, 8 April 1768, cited in Ramsey, p.187.

42. Anderson, pp.233-234.

Shelburne's scepticism seemed to be justified as the rumours of troops for Corsica subsided and lied away entirely at Paris by the end of March.⁴³ Nor, apparently, did he anticipate any more serious developments, since he readily agreed to Porten's request for a spell of home leave, to be taken in the following month.⁴⁴ But in the early part of April, a new and more alarming rumour began to circulate widely in Paris, that Genoa definitely intended making a cession of Corsica to France. Rochford wondered whether this had been set on foot deliberately to test Britain's reaction ; "for a Notion prevails here, that We should not interfere in it, if the French had such a Design." Accordingly, wherever he heard this opinion expressed, Rochford took it on himself to deny it most strongly ; so much so, that Choiseul chided him for suggesting in public circles that Britain would not remain indifferent to any larger French involvement in Corsica.⁴⁵ Châtelet adopted the same bold reproving tone with Shelburne in London, insisting once more that the rumours were wildly exaggerated.⁴⁶

But Rochford's suspicions were now thoroughly aroused, and he did his utmost to discover what was actually afoot, obviously sparing no expense. His contacts within the lower echelons of the French Ministry soon provided him with information of the utmost importance, and on 21 April Rochford was able not only to confirm the rumours of an intended cession, but in addition to supply a full and accurate forecast of the agreement under negotiation. Genoa's

43. SP 78/274, f.137, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 April 1768.

44. SP 78/274, f.150, Porten to Shelburne, 13 April 1768 ; *ibid.*, f.204, Shelburne to Porten, 22 April 1768.

45. SP 78/274, f.152, Rochford to Shelburne, 14 April 1768 ; Rochford did not mention Choiseul's rebuke, which is known only from the French sources ; see Anderson, p.238, citing AECF Angleterre, 478, Choiseul to Chatelet, 3 April 1768.

46. AECF Angleterre, 478, Châtelet to Choiseul, 8 and 22 April 1768, cited Anderson, p.238.

first project had involved a guarantee against Barbary pirates, which Choiseul had rejected, but the French counter-project now being considered by Genoa was that France should occupy Corsica with twenty Battalions, make herself mistress of the islanders and receive the whole revenue of the island, and that Genoa would agree to pay France her expenses in thus pacifying the island before restoring it to Genoese control. It required little genius to see through these terms ;

"I have also Reason to believe that this Court have adopted this Method preferably to having the Island yielded to Them outright, as it will answer as fully Their Intentions, and not give the same Jealousy to Us ; but when once Twenty Battalions of French Troops are landed there, and the French in Possession of the Island, I do not apprehend the Genoese will repay Them the Expence of the Expedition, or that the French will be disposed to restore it to them." ⁴⁷

Remarkably enough, Shelburne still made no positive response to this clear and urgent warning, other than to commend Rochford for his vigilance, and to discourse platitudinously upon the seriousness of a French acquisition of Corsica, "by any collusive Bargain or otherwise." He also conveyed the King's approval for Rochford's having "therefore judged very properly" in discouraging the notion that Britain would not object. But all he could suggest was that Rochford find out what the Sardinian Ambassador at Paris thought of the news ; there was no hint of any protest to Choiseul. ⁴⁸

47. SP 78/274, f.206, Rochford to Shelburne, 21 April 1768 ; Hall, p.250, is mistaken in saying that the British Government knew nothing of the terms until the end of June ; he is evidently unaware of this accurate forecast by Rochford in April. Nor were Rochford's the only spies at work ; Frederick II of Prussia had a garbled version of the project about this time (see Politische Correspondenz Freidrich's des Grossen, XXVII, 140, No.17180, dated 21 April 1768).

48. SP 78/274, f.210, Shelburne to Rochford, 29 April 1768, Secret.

Yet the very thing which Choiseul most feared at this time was a strong British protest, especially if accompanied by active interference, such as the sending of a fleet to blockade Corsica ; he warned Châtelet to keep a very close watch on Britain's reaction, and to avoid giving any opening whereby Britain might seek to involve herself in the agreement with Genoa.⁴⁹ Châtelet accordingly sent a man to tour the British naval yards, but he reported no activity out of the ordinary, and positively refuted the rumours that reinforcements were being prepared for Gibraltar and Minorca. By the end of April, Châtelet had seen little likelihood of serious British intervention. The silence of the British Ministry he attributed to lack of any definite policy regarding Corsica and continued ignorance of Choiseul's intentions. He doubted if the Ministers had sufficient foresight to act in concert with the Court of Turin.⁵⁰

Choiseul now kept a profound silence with the foreign ministers regarding Corsica ; Rochford observed, "as at first They were infinitely indiscreet in the Language they held, They now affect as great a Mystery." In fact, Britain's best chance to make an effective protest was rapidly slipping away, as Rochford reported at the end of April the arrival of Sorba's powers to treat formally with Choiseul.⁵¹ On 5 May, Rochford further reported the public announcement of twelve Battalions of troops for Corsica, under the

49. AECF Angleterre, 478, f.63, Choiseul to Châtelet, vers 18 April 1768, cited in Ramsey, p.187.

50. AECF Angleterre, 478, f.131, Châtelet to Choiseul, 29 April 1768, cited in Anderson, pp.238-9, and Ramsey, p.187.

51. SP 78/274, f.216, Rochford to Shelburne, 28 April 1768, Secret. Rochford noted that Choiseul had received a messenger from Genoa, and predicted that the French counter-project would now go ahead, though the troops would probably be sent as if on the same footing as before, "and great Care will be taken to give as little Alarm about it as possible."

command of his former rival at Turin, Chauvelin.⁵² With the five Battalions already in Corsica, this would make seventeen in all. Rochford had sounded the Sardinian Ambassador, who confessed that when he broached the subject of Corsica, Choiseul had "talked very mysteriously and in vague Terms." Rochford was now thoroughly alarmed, and moreover impatient at having no clear instructions ;

"Your Lordship and the rest of His Majesty's Servants are the best Judges whether it will be proper for me to demand from the Duke of Choiseul what the Intentions of this Court are with Regard to Corsica, what I would not take upon myself to do, least I should have received such an Answer as perhaps would not have been liked. I shall only therefore be very attentive in attending to what passes further on this Subject, untill I receive Other Instructions from Your Lordship."⁵³

It was as broad a hint as politeness and convention permitted from a diplomat in the field to his indecisive chief.

Yet even as Rochford drafted this dispatch, Shelburne was giving Châtelet his first clear warning that Britain could not remain indifferent to any sort of French acquisition of Corsica, as this would contravene Article Fifteen of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which guaranteed the status quo in Italy. Châtelet replied in mock astonishment that he knew of no such scheme (!), but pointed out that Genoa had clear sovereignty over Corsica to arrange its affairs as she pleased, since that article of the 1748 Treaty was understood to apply only to the mainland states at the time of the

52. See above, Chapter 5, pp.131-133.

53. SP 78/275, f.9, Rochford to Shelburne, 5 May 1768, Secret ; Abarca, p.311, overstates the case when he says that Rochford here asked for permission to demand an explanation from Choiseul, just as he earlier (p.310) misrepresents the nature of Rochford's advance intelligence of 21 April.

signing of the treaty. Shelburne had no answer to this, nor to Châtelet's declaration that France could not reasonably be expected to lay bare every stage of such a negotiation to the rest of Europe.⁵⁴ Shelburne remained uncertain whether to believe Châtelet's assurances or to suspect the worst as Rochford had done. His only instructions to Rochford were for him to use "Caution & Prudence" in talking of this with Choiseul ; quite the reverse of what Rochford felt was urgently necessary.⁵⁵

Despite Rochford's ample warning of what was afoot, Choiseul succeeded in keeping Shelburne in doubt as to his real intentions until it was too late to intervene effectively. Choiseul instructed Châtelet to make little of the whole affair, and to assure Shelburne that the current agreement was broadly similar to those of 1727, 1737, 1756, and 1764, to which no objections had been made.⁵⁶ Shelburne could only fall back on general arguments regarding the Balance of Power, and the necessity of preventing any one power from waxing over-mighty at the expense of its neighbours.⁵⁷

At Paris in the meantime, on 15 May, the new Convention between France and Genoa to decide the future of Corsica was signed. The terms were exactly as Rochford had forecast in April, the fourth Article being the key one which stipulated repayment by Genoa of France's expenses before the island would be restored to her ; in effect, an outright cession to France. Choiseul had achieved his fait accompli, and Britain had lost her best opportunity to intervene.⁵⁸

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55. SP 78/275, f.1, Shelburne to Rochford, 6 May 1768, Secret ; but compare AECF Angleterre, 478, f.166, Châtelet to Choiseul, 6 May 1768, cited in Ramsey, pp.187-188 ; Anderson, p.239, observes that Shelburne's account of this interview is much less adequate than that of Châtelet.
56. AECF Angleterre, 478, f.210, Choiseul to Châtelet, 12 May 1768, cited in Ramsey, p.237 (but there misprinted as March, which Anderson, p.237, follows ; see Ramsey's notes, p.258, n.17).
57. SP 78/275, f.11, Shelburne to Rochford, 18 May 1768, Secret.
58. Hall, p.200 ; Ramsey, pp.188-9, summarizes the treaty. There were fifteen published articles and two secret (on which see below).

Admittedly the information available to Shelburne was scanty and impossible to verify, but what he had was quite adequate for the formulation of a more positive policy and a demand of Choiseul's intentions such as Rochford had suggested. A strong protest in April or early in May might have made Choiseul pause, especially in view of the French King's fear of war and the nature of Choiseul's ultimate downfall over the Falkland Islands crisis in 1770. But once the Convention was signed and the French occupation of Corsica had begun, there was little effective action Britain could take short of war. 59

It was only as public opinion stirred in Britain in support of Paoli, largely in consequence of Boswell's publications on Corsica and his idealized portrait of Paoli, that a policy had to be found by the Ministers. Gallophobic fears of giving France such a marked strategic and (as was ignorantly supposed) economic advantage in the Mediterranean left no doubt in most English minds of the action to be taken ; a British squadron could have blockaded Corsica, preventing the landing of any more French troops, until Paoli and his followers had dealt with those already there. As for the future, this was left to vague suggestions of some sort of British protectorate. 60

But instead, Shelburne deferred any decision on Corsica until the matter could be discussed by a full Cabinet, and this was delayed by "a necessary Attention to Home Affairs at the opening

59. Anderson, pp.240-242, establishes the loss of opportunity ; Fitzmaurice's Life of Shelburne, II, 119-122, also argues that an earlier protest backed up by stern threats might have stopped Choiseul and enabled his opponents at Court to join forces.

60. Fitzmaurice, II, 138 ; on Boswell and the stirring of public opinion, see Anderson, pp.242-244. Boswell's Journal of a Tour to Corsica and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli were already being translated into French by Wiart ; Deffand to Walpole, 11 July 1768, Walpole Correspondence, edited by W.S. Lewis (Yale, 1937-), IV, 106-107.

of the Parliament, & to a tumultuous spirit . . . shewing itself among the different Classes of the Lower Sort of People." (This is one of the clearest instances of foreign policy waiting upon domestic affairs, which continental observers saw as the chief weakness of Britain's archaic shared Secretaryship of State before 1782.) ⁶¹

Shelburne's only instructions for Rochford were that he should maintain, "with your usual Discretion," the same general language as before, in support of which Shelburne enclosed extracts from earlier correspondence. One of these, from 1743, contained precisely the statement Rochford would have wished to make to Choiseul, "That Great Britain would not suffer the Republick of Genoa to sell Corsica to any Power whatsoever." Times had indeed changed ; Shelburne seems to have been nervous of plunging in more deeply, lest he gave his enemies a pretext for forcing him out of office. ⁶² All he could do was to try to bully Châtelet a little, with accusations that Corsica was but the first step in a final rupture with England which France and Spain had long been preparing ; but Châtelet could for once honestly laugh this off as preposterous. ⁶³

The one person who might have kept up the pressure on Shelburne for more prompt and positive action was Rochford himself. Yet by an unfortunate coincidence, at this very time Rochford fell gravely ill, and was fighting for his life in the middle part of May 1768, just as Choiseul and Sorba were signing the new Convention.

61. See the discussion, with abundant references, in Michael Roberts, Splendid Isolation, 1763-1780 (Reading, 1970), pp.4-7.

62. SP 78/275, f.11, Shelburne to Rochford, 18 May 1768, Secret ; *ibid.*, f.14, for the enclosed memoranda. On Shelburne's deteriorating position and the dislike of his colleagues, see further below, and also Brooke, The Chatham Administration, pp.328-331, 363-4.

63. AECP Angleterre, 478, f.274, Châtelet to Choiseul, 20 May 1768, cited in Ramsey, p.189.

Rochford's illness was indeed very serious. He later described it himself as "a continued and a putrid fever," which broke out on 3 May and kept him abed for more than two weeks. The physicians declared the crisis passed when Rochford's fever subsided on 17 May, but the illness left him very weak ; "Strength and Appetite come but slowly." He was of course much too weak to appear at Court for some time, and anticipated a lengthy convalescence "after so violent an Illness." Yet by 26 May he was able to sit up in bed, and felt "well enough to attend a little to Business," promising that he would be "as diligent as my Health will allow me."⁶⁴

Shelburne expressed the "great concern" of the King and his Ministers at Rochford's illness,⁶⁵ but the business of the Embassy remained in Porten's trustworthy care, and Rochford had him report to his bedside every conversation Porten held with "Those we can most depend on here." Thus it was that Rochford directed Porten to report on 18 May that the expedition for Corsica was hastening on "more suddenly than was at first imagined." This hasty departure of the first seven or eight Battalions might have been in consequence of a fresh outbreak of hostilities on the island, but Rochford and Porten agreed that it seemed far more likely that the French meant "to put in Execution their Project before they declare openly or publicly the Motives of it to the Courts of Europe." This inclined Rochford to think that the Convention had already been signed, as in fact it had been, just three days before.⁶⁶

64. SP 78/275, f.27, Porten to Shelburne, 18 May 1768 ; *ibid.*, f.47, Rochford to Shelburne, 26 May 1768 ; Walpole Correspondence, edited by W.S. Lewis (Yale, 1937-), IV, 73, Deffand to Walpole, 22 May 1768, remarks of Rochford ; "il a été fort malade."

65. SP 78/275, f.25, Shelburne to Porten, 20 May 1768.

66. SP 78/275, fos.16 and 27, Porten to Shelburne, 11 and 18 May 1768, Secret.

While Rochford was recovering from his illness, Porten attended at Court in his place, where Choiseul continued to assure him that the Convention would soon be made public, and that they intended no more than had been previously concerted with Genoa.⁶⁷ Choiseul came to visit Rochford at his house on the evening of Tuesday 24 May, to ensure that he had received these assurances. But even though Rochford remained without instructions from Shelburne, on his own initiative he seized the opportunity to sound Choiseul as to the probable reply should he make a formal demand of intent ;

"He heard me with great Patience, and as I am still extremely Weak, he affected the greatest Civility and Attention, and indeed, spoke with the greatest Douceur imaginable."

Rochford merely observed that as they were so obviously hastening their troops to Corsica, he would probably be instructed to ask what their intentions were with regard to Corsica, and Choiseul replied that if that were so, he would "confidently concert the Answer along with me, and agreeable to my Way of Thinking." But he added, more ominously, that France had been at an enormous expense in assisting Genoa with auxiliaries, and they were naturally desirous of being repaid in one way or another.

In the course of their conversation, the two men ranged over most of the arguments already raised, notably that based on the fifteenth Article of Aix-la-Chapelle, to which Choiseul made the same reply that Châtelet had made to Shelburne in London. Rochford then attempted to use the Turks Island dispute as a parallel case, in which France had, in response to Britain's "fair & open" dealings, refrained from making "an Innovation since the Peace," which Corsica

67. SP 78/275, f.39, Porten to Shelburne, 25 May 1768, Secret.

in French hands would undeniably be. Choiseul however argued that the cases were entirely different, and that France's intervention in Corsica was purely in defence of her southern coasts. From all this, Rochford gathered that "there will be at least the Risque of a brusque Answer."

Choiseul had taken pains to reassure Rochford and to lull his fears and suspicions ;

[Choiseul] " . . in the most solemn Manner assured me that there was nothing in Nature he would not do to preserve the Peace for Twenty Years to come ; that the King his Master dreaded the Thoughts of a War, and that indeed They were very far from being in a Condition to undertake one."

Here was a characteristic mixture of deception and truth, which seemed to Rochford merely to reflect Choiseul's anxiety that Britain might after all cause a fuss over Corsica ;

" . . the Truth is, that many People of the first consequence here, have blamed the Duke of Choiseul for this Expedition, least it should tend to create Mischief between France and Us."

He wondered whether Choiseul had assured Louis XV that Britain would not take umbrage, and that the King had then been surprised to hear of Rochford's contrary declarations in the salons of Paris. 68

Yet even as Rochford was making these tentative soundings on his own initiative, Shelburne was at last drafting his first major instructions on Corsica, which authorized Rochford to make the formal demand of intent to Choiseul he had so long awaited. There had been two full Cabinet meetings in London on the subject

of Corsica, and the Ministers had unanimously agreed that Rochford should impress upon Choiseul that the French acquisition of Corsica would endanger the peace of Europe, and that Britain could not remain idle or indifferent in such an event. This would be a step so "totally departing" from France's professed adherence to the peace, that Shelburne saw it as "a very sufficient Ground to apprehend a Change of System in the French Court, as far as the Professions of any Court deserve the name of a System."

Yet Shelburne's uncertainty persisted, and revealed itself in his advice to Rochford. While trusting in Rochford's "Coolness & Firmness" to give Choiseul a distinct impression of Britain's views, he stressed that Rochford should "take Care to preserve the utmost Temper" [viz. composure] until the actual terms of the Convention were made public, in order to avoid committing either Court to an extreme stance.

Châtelet had again that week assured Shelburne that the Convention was not yet concluded (!) and had repeated Choiseul's argument that France's interest in Corsica was purely defensive. Shelburne had countered this with the statement that whatever their purpose, the fact of possession was a matter of serious interest for Britain. To Rochford, he observed ;

"One need but look upon the Map to see its Importance with a View to Offence as well as Defence ; Not to mention the Recruits, the Sailors it may supply, the Timber for Shipbuilding, &c.; It will be from its Situation at once a Protection to their Own Coast, & an effectual Bridle on the Port of Leghorn, as well as a great Addition of Power in the Mediterranean." ⁶⁹

69. SP 78/275, f.32, Shelburne to Rochford, 27 May 1768, Most Secret; printed almost in full in British Diplomatic Instructions, 1689-1789, VII, France, iv (1745-1789), edited by L.G. Wickham Legg (London, 1934), pp.101-104. Frederick II had a similar view of the strategic value of Corsica ; see Politische Correspondenz, XXVII, 196-7, Frederick to Maltzan, 2 June 1768.

Shelburne's Instructions reached Rochford on 30 May, just in time for Choiseul's visit to Rochford on the evening of 31 May. Rochford noted that Choiseul spoke "not only with the greatest Coolness and Temper, but with an unaccountable Frankness and good Humour" ; well he might, almost certain of having carried off a major diplomatic coup. But Rochford, in relating very closely Shelburne's instructions from a unanimous Cabinet, was "nevertheless excessively serious" as he impressed upon Choiseul, "in the strongest but the civilest Terms," how seriously the British Government viewed France's Corsican venture. In addition, Rochford tried to draw Choiseul out, "as he is apt enough to speak freely on every Subject, and sometimes indiscreetly," by suggesting that unless he could quiet the alarms of his countrymen this affair "might be attended with fatal Consequences."

"I saw I ran no Risk in going thus far, as by the Humour he was in, I do not believe a Threat would have ruffled him, or have drawn a severe Reply from him."

Yet this tactic proved successful. Choiseul admitted that Châtelet's dispatches were full of anxiety at the talk of war and expeditions current in London, of Lord Howe's being sent to the Mediterranean, and Sir Edward Hawke's being summoned to Cabinet meetings. When Rochford reassured Choiseul that Hawke was in fact a member of the Cabinet Council ordinarily, as First Lord of the Admiralty, Choiseul complimented Rochford on his evident sincere desire to preserve their friendship, and began to discourse in a much more relaxed and confidential fashion. Rochford steered the conversation towards the terms of the Convention, and was rewarded with Choiseul's first explicit admission that the present arrangements would probably result in an outright cession to France.

Having admitted that he believed Genoa would not only never be able to reimburse them, but never intended it, Choiseul hastened to add that this was the only possible method of settling the vexed question of Corsica, as Genoa now refused absolutely to treat with Paoli and he with them. Rochford here asked whether there were not any secret articles to the new Convention, and Choiseul promised that he would soon let Rochford read the whole document in the original. Choiseul then paused a little, and said ;

"This has been a Project of my own ; Many Others were proposed on the Genoese applying to Us, some of which would justly have given offence."

But he insisted that he had not imagined his present scheme giving any umbrage to another Court, much less to Britain, "so far distant from the Place in question."

Rochford at once replied that considering Choiseul's known wisdom and prudence, "I was amazed he did not sound us before he engaged so far in it," and reminded Choiseul that when Rochford first mentioned this affair, "his Language was rather different then from what it is now." Rochford added,

"that the Hurrying on this Affair looked as if They had intended not to have given us time to interfere, untill They could say It was too late."

This simple statement of truth was a shrewd and telling point, which visibly embarrassed the Minister. Yet Choiseul insisted that they were now too far committed to think of retreat. He said that if the troops had not already been sent, he would give it up,

"coûte qui coûte, mais de la faire à présent, Nous serions deshonoré à jamais dans les Yeux de tout le Monde, et la Ruine tomberoit particulièrement sur moi ; ainsi, que faire ? car pourtant il n'est pas possible d'avoir la Guerre pour la Corse! -- cela seroit trop ridicule, pourtant si on nous attaque, il faudroit nous defendre. L'alternative est terrible! "

Choiseul solemnly assured Rochford it was not his intention to deceive ; but by now Rochford had learned to recognize that this exaggerated solemnity usually accompanied Choiseul's greatest deceptions. Even so, he reflected later that the whole interview tended to confirm his impression that

"Peace is certainly their present Object ; the very Alarm the whole French Nation is at this Moment in, is a strong Voucher how much They dread a War, and it may be added that the Duke of Choiseul is personally interested to prevent it."

Rochford gladly agreed to Choiseul's request that he submit a formal Note containing the demand he had been instructed to make of them. ⁷⁰

Two days after this long and revealing interview, Rochford submitted his Note, which Choiseul acknowledged that same day, deferring a formal Reply until after a Council had met upon the matter with the French King. ⁷¹ Now that Rochford was up and about again, Porten prepared to leave for England on his home leave, which had been delayed by Rochford's illness. ⁷² Also at this time, Rochford's contacts within the French administration supplied him with the gist of the two secret articles, which were, firstly, that France was to pay Genoa a subsidy of 200,000 livres a year for the next ten years, and secondly, that France promised never to yield any part of Corsica to a third party, which meant not only the insurgent Corsicans but any other power whatever. ⁷³

70. SP 78/275, f.59, Rochford to Shelburne, 2 June 1768, Most Secret ; extract printed in Fitzmaurice, II, 129 ; see also Anderson, p.247, and Abarca, pp.319-321.

71. SP 78/275, f.69, Rochford to Choiseul, 2 June 1768 ; *ibid.*, f.71, Choiseul to Rochford, 2 June 1768.

72. SP 78/275, f.65, Porten to Shelburne, 5 June 1768.

73. SP 78/275, f.67, Rochford to Shelburne, 6 June 1768.

Choiseul's formal Reply on 5 June was remarkably mild in its tone, and merely recapitulated all the familiar arguments, that France's interest in Corsica was purely defensive, and that the present agreement in no way contravened the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. ⁷⁴ A few days later, Rochford felt well enough to visit Choiseul at his house, where they talked a long while on Corsica. Rochford's Note had said that the conduct of the Court of Versailles had given just grounds for doubting the pacific assurances of the French King ; Choiseul remarked that he thought this "was wrote in very strong Terms," and when the Note was read out in Council, Louis XV had been heard to murmur, did the English King take him to be a rascal ? ("Est-ce que le Roi d'Angleterre me croit un Fripon?"). Choiseul's reply had stressed what he again dwelt upon to Rochford, namely, the French King's friendship and confidence towards George III, and his desire to quiet Britain's alarms. Rochford replied sternly and with dignity,

"that Facts spoke for themselves, and that Assurances of pacifick Intentions whilst they were apparently acquiring Extent of Force and Possessions, was so contradictory that it could not but give Doubts ; and that my Court desired nothing more than to have those Doubts cleared up."

Choiseul promised to show Rochford the whole treaty on his return from the country next week, and trusted that when he saw the whole, his Court would be satisfied. ⁷⁵

But in fact, Choiseul was nervous of Britain's reaction once the full treaty was known, and he took care to delay this

74. SP 78/275, f.73, Choiseul to Rochford, 5 June 1768 ; Vaucher, (ed.) Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France, XXV-2, Angleterre, iii, p.451, prints an extract from a copy in AECP Angleterre, 479, f.55.

75. SP 78/275, f.75, Rochford to Shelburne, 9 June 1768, Secret.

revelation as long as he decently could. Rochford knew that the Ratifications had arrived back from Genoa the day before, but did not mention this lest Choiseul guess his sources of information,⁷⁴ so that it was doubly odd for the Sardinian Ambassador to be told, when he asked for a confidential communication of the treaty, that he would in time receive this from the English Court. It became obvious that Choiseul was merely playing for time when he sent the Genoese Minister, Sorba, to visit Rochford in an attempt to convince him that they were not actually ceding Corsica to France ; Choiseul had already admitted to Rochford that they were.⁷⁵

It was not until 18 June that Choiseul finally handed Rochford a copy of the Convention with Genoa, together with the two secret articles, which were exactly as Rochford had earlier been informed. In the midst of his fulsome assurances of peaceful intent, Rochford noticed that Choiseul stressed above else Britain's obligation to show where it infringed any existing treaty before she made any further objections. In reply, Rochford stated flatly that such a large acquisition of territory "could not but give a just Alarm" to the rest of Europe.⁷⁶

But Choiseul remained confident and untroubled once he saw that Rochford had no immediate instructions to protest the de facto cession so plainly revealed in the fourth Article. He wrote two letters to Châtelet on 20 June, supplying arguments with which to defend his peaceful intentions to Shelburne,⁷⁷ and after reading Châtelet's reports from London, he remarked to Rochford that the

74. SP 78/275, f.75, Rochford to Shelburne, 9 June 1768, Secret.

75. SP 78/275, f.86, Rochford to Shelburne, 16 June 1768, Secret.

76. SP 78/275, f.90, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 June 1768, Secret.

77. AECF Angleterre, 479, fos.160 and 164, Choiseul to Châtelet, both 20 June 1768, cited in Ramsey, p.190.

British Ministers seemed at last to be "un peu adouci" over the Corsican affair. ⁷⁸

For once, Choiseul was better informed of the decisions of the British Ministry than Rochford himself. There had been a further important Cabinet meeting in mid-June, at which the divisions within the Ministry had become acutely obvious. Shelburne, Grafton, Camden, and Hawke, had all pressed for stern measures over Corsica, but the Bedfordites, Weymouth and Gower, and even North, had opposed any stand which might risk a war, arguing that Corsica was simply not worth a major war. The rift between the two Secretaries, Weymouth and Shelburne, was particularly obvious. Weymouth had told Châtelet privately at the end of May that he cared little for Corsica, and Châtelet had thereafter taken care to prime Weymouth and Gower with suitable arguments to use against Shelburne. These arguments now won the day, and the Cabinet finally decided not to intervene over Corsica, nor to make any stronger threats or protest to France. ⁷⁹

Shelburne's position in the Ministry was steadily being undermined by his Bedfordite adversaries, as had been made plain earlier that month with the appointment of their nominee, Lynch, to Turin without any consultation with him in whose Department that post lay. ⁸⁰ But Rochford's communication of the text of the Convention on Corsica, with its clear proof of an intended cession to France,

78. SP 78/275, f.96, Rochford to Shelburne, 23 June 1768, Secret.

79. AECF Angleterre, 479, f.115, Châtelet to Choiseul, 18 June 1768, cited in Anderson, p.248, Ramsey, pp.189-190, and Vaucher, p.451. Fitzmaurice, II, 124, quotes at length from reports of the Neapolitan Envoy, Carracciolo to Tanucci, 27 May and 3 June, on the divisions within the Cabinet; Weymouth's main argument was that Britain had nothing to fear while she held superiority at sea. See also Anderson, pp.247-8, and Ramsey, p.189, for AECF Angleterre, 478, Châtelet to Choiseul, 29 May, and *ibid.*, 479, Châtelet to Choiseul, 10 June 1768.

80. See Fitzmaurice, II, 128, and Brooke, The Chatham Administration, pp.363-4.

gave Shelburne fresh ammunition, as public opinion again stirred in protest against a French acquisition and criticism of the lack of any clear British policy began to appear in the London papers.⁸¹ Shelburne called another Cabinet meeting for the end of June, and in the meantime warned Châtelet there was still a lively danger of war unless his Court explained itself in a less contradictory manner. Shelburne could not, of course, give Rochford any fresh instructions without the sanction of Cabinet, but his next letter of 24 June was as firm and vigorous in tone as he dared make it, reflecting bitterly on Choiseul's duplicity and delaying tactics.⁸²

Rochford gladly took up this tone at Paris, and in the week which followed he kept Choiseul on edge and fearful that Britain might after all take more decisive action over Corsica. On the morning of 28 June, Rochford went to see Choiseul, and found him "greatly agitated . . . as soon as he saw me, he said, Nous voilà à la Guerre! " He had just received Châtelet's dispatch reporting Shelburne's warning that a war might yet result over Corsica. After this melodramatic opening, Choiseul's conversation became, Rochford noted, "rather serious," as he laboured in all earnestness to persuade Rochford that while they could not possibly retract, they would do all they could to avoid a war. In reporting this long and rambling interview to Shelburne, Rochford declined to comment on the sincerity of these assurances ;

"I will not pretend to determine, or make myself answerable for the Asseverations of any Minister whatever, especially a French One ;"

81. AECP Angleterre, 479, f.203, Châtelet to Choiseul, 24 June 1768, cited in Anderson, p.250, and Ramsey, p.190.

82. SP 78/275, f.92, Shelburne to Rochford, 24 June 1768, Secret.

but he was firmly convinced that Choiseul really did dread a war, and indicated to Shelburne that here lay Britain's sole remaining chance of successful intervention ; but only

" . . if a Method could be pointed out to Them that would save their Honor, and satisfy Us, and we insist upon it with firmness." ⁸³

This was a fair assessment of the situation at the end of June, and Rochford was not alone in it ; Frederick II of Prussia was watching the course of this affair with great interest, through Maltzan in London and Thulemeier at the Hague. He too was convinced that Choiseul feared war at this juncture, and approved of Rochford's "ton fort haut" at Paris, for an unopposed victory over Corsica he guessed would only encourage France and Spain to make larger ventures and provoke another war. But he was equally convinced that the present British Ministry was too divided and pusillanimous to outstare Choiseul over Corsica. ⁸⁴

In this Frederick was, as usual, shrewdly correct ; the firm insistence which Rochford had advocated was not taken up, much less any positive threat of intervention. When Cabinet met at the end of June, it tamely accepted the evidence of cession as a fait accompli, about which nothing could be done. ⁸⁵

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83. SP 78/275, f.115, Rochford to Shelburne, 30 June 1768, Secret ; this dispatch is summarized in Fitzmaurice, II, 136-7, but there wrongly cited as 4 July.
84. See Politische Correspondenz, XXVII, 199-223, passim, notably letters to Maltzan of 7, 11, and 23 June (Fitzmaurice, II, 137-8, prints an extract from that of 7 June), to Rohd of 21 June, and to Prince Henry of Prussia dated 28 June 1768.
85. AECF Angleterre, 479, f.270, Châtelet to Choiseul, 1 July 1768, cited in Anderson, p.251, Ramsey, p.190, and Vaucher, p.452 ; Grafton remarked to Châtelet that within one year Corsica would be as entirely a French province as Alsace or Lorraine. Châtelet's opinion of the British Ministers was that they had no experience, opinions, or principles, and little sense.

Shelburne's next instructions to Rochford, of 1 July, were therefore astonishingly weak. Though the Cabinet had agreed unanimously that this was clearly an absolute cession, and as such a departure from the system hitherto professed by the French Court, the only task they could think of to commend to Rochford was that he try to ascertain the true causes of this step ; was it Choiseul's own scheme, or a change of policy by the French King himself ? : as if Rochford's recent dispatches had not already answered this ! Shelburne clothed this lame response with much bitter descanting upon France's deceitful conduct ; the whole scheme had been

"carried on with that Reserve and Obscurity in the Commencement of the Design, and Rapidity in its Execution, which give just Reason to suspect further Views than They even now profess . ."

He was especially annoyed that Choiseul should think them "un peu adouci sur cette affaire" ; but his bitterness seems chiefly to stem from resentment that he had been overruled in Cabinet and defeated by a cleverly executed fait accompli.⁸⁶

If, as Frederick II believed, the resolution of the British Cabinet was notable only for its feebleness,⁸⁷ the same could not be said of their representative in Paris. Rochford was glad to see that their sentiments regarding Corsica tallied so closely with his own, but he chose to follow the spirit rather than the letter of Shelburne's instructions in his next interview with Choiseul.

86. SP 78/275, f.104, Shelburne to Rochford, 1 July 1768, Secret ; extracts printed in Fitzmaurice, II, 130-131, and in British Diplomatic Instructions, 1689-1789, VII, France, iv, pp.104-105.

87. Politische Correspondenz, XXVII, 235, Frederick to Maltzan, 4 July 1768 ; see also, 246, 264, 266, for similar sentiments in letters to Rohd at Vienna of 10 and 20 July, and to Thulemeier of 21 July.

Shelburne had reminded Rochford to continue refuting the notion that Britain in any way condoned France's acquisition of Corsica, "but on the contrary to set in a strong Light the Imprudence and Unadvisedness of such a Measure." Rochford took this as his real touchstone. He repeated to Choiseul his warning that Britain could not remain indifferent to such a large increase of territory and power,

"and made use of the strongest Terms to shew Him the fatal Consequences that must necessarily arise from his destroying the Confidence that subsisted between the Two Nations ; I reproached him with having told me in a former Conference "que Nous etions adoucés sur cette Affaire" ; but that now I should make it my particular Business to undeceive the Foreign Ministers, and Every Body else, for that My Court considered this Measure, not only as imprudent, and ill-advised, but which must infallibly endanger the Peace of Europe."

It will be noted how Rochford contrived, while using Shelburne's own expressions, to go just a little further and suggest the shadow of a threat. Choiseul did not fail to notice it, either ;

"This put him greatly out of Humour, and some very warm Expressions fell from Him, such as, 'that if we had no Confidence in them, They had none in Us ; that the King his Master was excessively picqued at Our meddling in a Business which we had no Right to interfere in ; that what They had done, They had a Right to do ; and although They wished to avoid a War, yet if We would drive Them into one, They would not try to avoid it, for Nothing would induce Them either to retract, or to recall Their Troops.' "

Choiseul realised he had gone too far, and endeavoured to soften this with earnest professions of peaceable intentions, calling God

to witness that he had "no distant View whatever in this Project." Choiseul then warned Rochford that if he noised it about that Britain thought this an ill-advised measure which would endanger the Peace of Europe, he would only aigrir les esprits and increase that very danger.

But Rochford chose to ignore this entreaty, for he knew that at this juncture "Nothing could give him more personal Uneasiness." Rochford was convinced the Corsican adventure was Choiseul's own scheme, "relying on Our Party Divisions not allowing Us to attend to it," and assured Shelburne that the dread of a war had raised many enemies against him because of it. Yet Rochford was not carried away with hopes of seeing Choiseul overthrown. Indeed, he judged that Choiseul would probably hold his place if he could stave off a war, because of the French King's aversion to business and dislike of change. He would fall only if Louis XV could be brought to believe the accusations of Choiseul's enemies, and there was little likelihood of this from the opposition's identification with a fractious Parlement.

There remained in Rochford's opinion a slender chance that Choiseul might be forced to retreat from Corsica rather than risk a war ;

" as I know for some Days past, He has been uneasy and has had his Fears, I cannot help thinking that his Fears may overballance his Security, and perhaps if he saw an immediate War inevitable, even dishonourable as it would be, he would recall the Troops." 88

88. SP 78/275, f.120, Rochford to Shelburne, 7 July 1768, Secret ; Frederick II noted with approval Rochford's strong and vigorous representations ("très fort et très nerveux") ; Politische Correspondenz, XXVII, 266-7, Frederick to Maltzan, 21 July 1768. But he doubted if the divided British Ministry would support this with similarly vigorous action.

Though it is debatable whether this slender chance would have proven as fruitful as Rochford hoped, he was given no opportunity to exploit it ; Châtelet returned to Paris on 9 July, and swiftly erased whatever doubts and fears Rochford had succeeded in raising in Choiseul's mind ;

"Since his Arrival the Minds of the People here are a little quieted, as he gives out everywhere that there is not the least probability of a warm Account of Corsica." ⁸⁹

Châtelet assured Choiseul that Rochford's spirited remonstrations went beyond the agreed decision of his Government at home, and from London the French Chargé, Francés, reported that the usual barometer for a crisis or impending war, the marine insurance rates, remained at their normal peacetime levels ; in short, Rochford's threatening tone was revealed as a piece of unsupported bluff. ⁹⁰

It was not only Châtelet who reassured Choiseul that he need not fear a war over Corsica. About this time, Lord Mansfield who was then on a visit to Paris, was heard to declare at table 'that the English Ministry were too weak, and the nation too wise to support them in entering on a war for the sake of Corsica.' ⁹¹

89. SP 78/275, f.148, Rochford to Shelburne, 14 July 1766.

90. Anderson, pp.251-252.

91. Autobiographical and Political Correspondence of . . . the Third Duke of Grafton, edited by W.R. Anson (London, 1898), p.204. Grafton cites for this a private letter from Rochford, which does not however appear to have survived amongst the Grafton Papers now at the Bury St Edmunds and West Suffolk Record Office. Grafton adds in these memoirs (written c.1804-1806) that Rochford "conducted himself with dignified firmness and discretion throughout the business"(i.e. over Corsica). Mansfield's remark is also noted in Fitzmaurice's Life of Shelburne, II, 139-140 ; Political Memoranda of . . . the fifth Duke of Leeds, edited by Oscar Browning (London, 1884), p.25 and note ; and in Stanhope's History of England (1836-54), V, 301-302. See also Horn, British Diplomatic Service, p.196.

By the following week it was obvious even to Rochford that "the Storm which seemed to threaten . . is blown over." Choiseul was visibly more cheerful and at ease, declaring openly that the Corsican adventure would have no fâcheuse suite. Chatelet was likewise assiduous in assuring everyone he met that there was now no risk of war. These denials in fact gave rise to a rumour that Rochford had retracted and denied the strong language he had held to Choiseul ; moreover it had reached Choiseul's ears that Rochford had declared he had been tricked by the French Minister, and would therefore personally put no further confidence in him. This Rochford vehemently denied to Choiseul himself, and also in his report to Shelburne ; "had I even thought so, it would have been the Height of Imprudence to have suggested it to any Person breathing.' But he felt obliged to mention "such a gossiping Detail" because of the large number of English visitors then in Paris, and the strange tales which might be relayed back to London. ⁹²

Whatever crisis there had been was now definitely over, and at this point the British Government passed from "what may be ⁹³ called the period of ineffective protest to that of sulky acquiescence. Shelburne's next letter to Rochford, of 22 July, was astonishingly brief, and merely referred Rochford to his previous instructions. ⁹⁴ Rochford responded with a distinctly bare and impersonal note of acknowledgement. ⁹⁵

92. SP 78/275, f.160, Rochford to Shelburne, 21 July 1768, Secret.

93. This is M.S. Anderson's delightful description ; p.252.

94. SP 78/275, f.152, Shelburne to Rochford, 22 July 1768, Separate.

95. SP 78/275, f.175, Rochford to Shelburne, 28 July 1768.

As soon as he perceived that he had lost the game to Choiseul, Rochford had in fact applied for home leave, which was immediately granted.⁹⁶ The ostensible reason was of course the state of his health, still much reduced by his serious illness in May.⁹⁷ But the sense of defeat and failure must also have been a strong inducement for Rochford to quit the salons of Paris for a time at least. This sense of defeat was surely not improved by Shelburne's report of 12 August that Châtelet had remarked upon Rochford's having used apparently stronger terms than he was authorized to use ; Shelburne had denied this to Châtelet, but added a warning for Rochford tantamount to a rebuke, that he should avoid letting drop in conversation anything which might be construed as "a personal Resentment" against Choiseul.⁹⁸

It is surely significant that in the latter part of July, Rochford's trusty friend and colleague Stanier Porten, still in England on leave, suddenly resigned his Secretaryship of the Paris Embassy.⁹⁹ Rochford therefore had to remain in Paris for several more weeks until the arrival of Porten's successor, the Hon. Robert Walpole.¹⁰⁰ In the course of these last few weeks at Paris, Rochford continued to report regularly on the French campaign to subdue Paoli's insurgents on Corsica, and the reverses met by the French troops at first. Though the French claimed a victory in their

96. SP 78/275, f.154, Shelburne to Rochford, 22 July 1768.

97. Early in June, Lucy had told Mme du Deffand that Rochford very much wished to return to London as soon as he was well enough to travel ; Walpole Correspondence, edited by W.S. Lewis (Yale, 1937-), IV, 85 ; Deffand to Walpole, 11 June 1768.

98. SP 78/275, f.180, Shelburne to Rochford, 12 August 1768, Secret.

99. SP 78/275, f.200, Shelburne to Rochford, 19 August 1768.

100. SP 78/275, f.156, Shelburne to Walpole, 22 July 1768 ; he was the son of Baron Walpole of Wolterton, and cousin to Horace Walpole.

first pitched battle with the Corsicans in July, one Battallion was so badly mauled it had to be withdrawn, four more were ordered to leave for Corsica, Chauvelin was sent to the island in haste to take command of the campaign, and fears revived at Paris over the expense and the danger of a war. There were the usual rumours of an impending bankruptcy being declared, and Rochford shrewdly observed ;

"a particular Attention at this Moment to their publick Credit may give more Light into their Politicks than any other Observation." ¹⁰¹

Though Choiseul's supporters made much of the supposed success of French arms, Rochford was well-informed that most of the other French Ministers were "both sorry and ashamed of the Affair," and Mme du Deffand remarked that Choiseul appeared to have counted his chickens before they had hatched. ¹⁰²

These few indications suggest that Rochford's slender chance was not wholly unrealistic, and that a determined protest by Britain on top of the first bloody encounters in what Choiseul had promised would be a peaceful occupation might have stimulated Choiseul's opponents at Court to intervene against him with the King. But Corsica had rapidly disappeared from view in British Government circles, displaced by the more urgent problems of America and the continued domestic unrest set in motion by the proceedings against the notorious John Wilkes. By September, Corsica was no longer even a topic of conversation 'dans le monde' in London, ¹⁰³ and in October

101. SP 78/275, f.207, Rochford to Shelburne, 25 August 1768, Secret ; quoted in Fitzmaurice, II, 138-9, but wrongly cited as 25 July.

102. SP 78/275, f.202, Rochford to Shelburne, 18 August 1768, Secret ; Walpole Correspondence, edited by W.S. Lewis (Yale, 1937-), IV, 157 ; Deffand to Walpole, 31 October 1768.

103. Anderson, p.253, citing AECP Angleterre, 480, Francès to Choiseul, 2 and 9 September 1768.

the Speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament made no mention whatever of the French acquisition of Corsica. As the session got under way, the weakness of the opposition soon became apparent, and despite noisy criticisms from Burke and Beckford, a motion for papers on the Corsican affair was easily defeated. ¹⁰⁴

The new Secretary for the Paris Embassy arrived at Compiègne on 23 August, where Rochford at once introduced him to Choiseul and the other French Ministers. Rochford then took his audiences of leave with the Royal Family, and returned to Paris to hand over the ciphers and to acquaint Walpole with the routine of the Embassy. Walpole reported to Shelburne that Rochford had, "with the greatest Openness and Confidence" given him very full information and ample instructions for his conduct, "and on the Method of doing Business" ; here was yet another of Rochford's Secretaries who adopted the diplomatic service for his career. ¹⁰⁵

Rochford presumably left Paris as planned, on 1 September, and would have arrived in London a few days later. ¹⁰⁶ It is not possible to state with any certainty whether he returned merely for a short break, expecting to return to Paris, or whether he had any expectations of a Cabinet post ; direct evidence is lacking. Though Lady Rochford remained in France with her friend Mme de Forcalquier, which suggests Rochford meant to return, ¹⁰⁷ he must

104. Anderson, pp.257-8 ; Ramsey, p.190, citing AECF Angleterre, 481, f.72, Châtelet to Choiseul, 11 October 1768.

105. SP 78/275, fos.211 and 217, Rochford to Shelburne, 25 and 31 August 1768 ; *ibid.*, f.219, Walpole to Shelburne, 31 August 1768.

106. SP 78/275, f.217, Rochford to Shelburne, 31 August 1768.

107. Walpole Correspondence, edited by W.S. Lewis (Yale, 1937-), IV, 173, Deffand to Walpole, 27 December 1768.

have been aware that Shelburne's days as Secretary of State were numbered, with Grafton and the Bedford faction intent on ousting him, and very likely wanted to be on hand in case his name was suggested as a replacement. This was, it seems, the general view of Rochford's return to England at this juncture ; Mansfield wrote to Newcastle on 6 September ;

"Lord Rochford is come over, I guess to be Secretary of State. Those here, to whom it was offered, it seems declined." ¹⁰⁸

Newcastle approved of this possibility, but was not so sure of Rochford's willingness to join the Ministry which had failed to support him as Ambassador at Paris, as he pointed out to Albemarle ;

"I want particularly to speak to you about your friend Rochford. I hear it is reported that he is to be Secretary of State. He is the fittest for it of any man in England ; but I would have him come in with our friends, and not with the present Ministers, who will endeavour to get him ; but that your Lordship must prevent." ¹⁰⁹

But the Ministers were not the only ones thinking of Rochford as a replacement for Shelburne ; on 15 September, George III wrote to Grafton reporting a conversation he had held the day before with Camden on this very subject. After canvassing various names, the King had let drop Rochford's name ;

"as he could neither be called of the Bedford connection nor adverse to the Earl of Chatham,"

and Camden had agreed that he seemed the best choice available. ¹¹⁰

108. BM Add MSS 32991a, f.69, Mansfield to Newcastle, 6 September 1768.

109. BM Add MSS 32991a, f.107, Newcastle to Albemarle, 16 September 1768 ; extract printed in Winstanley, Lord Chatham and the Whig Opposition (1912), p.236, n.1.

110. Correspondence of George III, 1760-1783, edited by J. Fortescue (1927-28), II, No.651, George III to Grafton, 15 September 1768 ; the original of this letter is in the Grafton Papers at the Bury St Edmunds and West Suffolk Record Office, II, A, 519.

Soon after this conversation took place, Grafton decided that Shelburne must be compelled to resign, either not guessing or not wishing to guess that this would very likely entail Chatham's resignation also. The first three weeks of October witnessed Grafton's agonized dilemma, when Chatham made clear his intention of resigning for the sake of his health. At last, Shelburne resigned without telling the other Ministers, and a day later, on 20 October, Chatham also resigned. Announcing this news to Newcastle, Albemarle added ; "Rochford is enlisted, & will certainly get one of the Cabinet places . ." 108

In fact, Rochford was appointed Secretary of State that very same day, 21 October 1768. Yet contrary to most expectations, that he should be appointed to the Southern Department in which his diplomatic experience lay, he was appointed to the Northern, and Weymouth transferred to the Southern, indeed, insisted on it, as in his view "the most material business to this Country must go thro' the hands of him who has the Southern Correspondence." 109

Unfortunately, no direct evidence has yet come to light for Rochford's own feelings at this critical juncture of his career. Burke later explained this matter, or so he claimed, "exactly in the light in which it has been universally received" ; that Rochford had remonstrated vigorously against the French acquisition of Corsica,

108. BM Add MSS 32991, fos.295 and 305, Albemarle to Newcastle, 21 and 22 October 1768. See also Brooke, The Chatham Administration, pp.376-383.

109. Grafton Papers, Bury St Edmunds and West Suffolk Record Office, A, II, 799 ; Weymouth to Grafton, 6 September 1768 ; also quoted in Brooke, p.375. BM Add MSS 32991, f.313, Rochford to Newcastle, 23 October 1768 (from Berkley Square), gives thanks for what must have been Newcastle's congratulations on Rochford's appointment. See also Collins Peerage of England (1779), IV, 144 ; and the London Magazine (1768), p.706, for the date of appointment.

but found that the instructions upon which he did so were not supported by the rest of the Cabinet ;

"Lord Rochford, a man of spirit, could not endure this situation . . . He returns from Paris, and comes home full of anger. Lord Shelburne, who gave the orders, is obliged to give up the Seals. Lord Rochford, who obeyed these orders, receives them. He goes, however, into another Department of the same Office, that he might not be obliged officially to acquiesce, in one situation, under what he had officially remonstrated against, in another. At Paris, the Duke of Choiseul considered this office arrangement as a compliment to him ; here it was spoken of as an attention to the delicacy of Lord Rochford." 110

Choiseul's opinion of Rochford was indeed contemptuous in the extreme. He wrote to Ossun at Madrid late in September that the rumours of Rochford's appointment as Secretary of State must cause Grimaldi mirth and astonishment ;

". . . en connoissant parfaitement le mépris que l'on doit avoir pour les talents et le caractère de M. de Rochford, je crains toujours d'avoir à faire à un fol imbécile." 111

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110. Edmund Burke, Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents (1770), edited by W. Murison (Cambridge, 1913), pp. 46-47. A similar view was expressed in a letter to the Public Advertiser of 26 October 1768, signed "Why?" but generally attributed to Junius, which questioned the manifest absurdity of appointing Rochford to a Department in which he had no experience when he was so eminently qualified for the other. Among other things, this letter pays tribute to Rochford's "great abilities", his "constant attention to business" at foreign Courts, and his "neutrality and non-attachment to any particular men or measures," and establishes the general joy and "universal approbation" of the public to see a career diplomat at last given charge of foreign affairs. See also John Almon's Anecdotes of the . . . Earl of Chatham (London, 1793), II, 141-142.
111. AECF Espagne 575, Choiseul to Ossun, 27 September 1768 ; quoted in Abarca, "Bourbon 'revanche' against England" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Notre Dame, 1965), p. 200, note 129.

Earlier, on 4 August, Choiseul had written to Durand, the Secretary of the French Embassy in London, that Rochford's rumoured appointment as Secretary of State

"ne mérite aucune sort de consideration, car c'est la plus pauvre espèce en tous genres que j'aye jamais vû. Cependant vous chercherez l'occasion de le flagorner . . . Son point de folie est de vouloir jouer un rôle et que l'on croye un grand politique, et surtout il imagine imiter Robert Walpole. Voilà un canevas assez vaste pour lui dire des riens et vous attirer sa confiance ; il vous la donnera aisément, si vous le flattez, car moi, qui ne le flatte pas, il me dit tout ce qu'il pense et, quoique ce soit bien peu de choses, il n'est pas à négliger de savoir ce qu'il fera à Londres." 112

But perhaps the most damning comment Choiseul had to make about Rochford was that expressed to Châtelet late in November ;

"Le Comte de Rochford est si inconsidéré, si indiscret, et si borné qu'il n'est guère possible de prendre quelque confiance en lui ; cependant comme il n'est pas moins incompetent, il se conduira peut-être plus convenablement à notre égard dans la place qu'il occupe qu'il n'a fait pendant qu'il a residé en France." 113

Why had Choiseul formed such a bitter dislike of Rochford ? Were his remarks merely the product of personal spite, or do they hold some element of truth ? Again, apart from the scanty fragments quoted above, the evidence remains inconclusive, but fortunately there survive two useful clues in sources which cannot be described as partial to Rochford himself. The first is

112. AECP Angleterre 474, f.248, Choiseul to Durand, 4 August 1768 ; printed in Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France . . . XXV-2, Angleterre, iii (1698-1791), edited by P. Vaucher (Paris, 1965), p.432, note 13.

113. AECP Angleterre 481, f.373, Choiseul to Châtelet, 29 November 1768 ; also quoted in Vaucher, p.452.

a statement by Horace Walpole, that Rochford had told him on his return to London that the cause of Choiseul's hatred for him was the spirit with which he had behaved at Paris, especially over the Corsican affair ;

"against which he had remonstrated with more warmth than he had been encouraged to do from home ; and had he, as he told me himself, been authorised to hold a firm language, France would not have ventured to proceed in that conquest."

It is at this point in his Memoirs that Walpole makes his own considered and, as it proved, influential, estimation of Rochford ;

"Lord Rochford was a man of no abilities, and of as little knowledge, except in the routine of office ; but he meant honestly, behaved plausibly, was pliant enough to take whatever was offered to him, and too inoffensive to give alarm or jealousy to any party." 114

The other clue comes from Rochford's Madrid Embassy, in a remark made by the Abbé Béliardi to Choiseul about Rochford ;

"cet homme ment beaucoup, qu'il change assez souvent de propos et qu'il serait difficile de juger ce qu'il pense par ce qu'il dit." 115

Lies and deception were inescapable ingredients of the art of diplomacy, and as Rochford himself once observed, trusting too far was a dangerous luxury. It does not seem too improbable that Choiseul disliked Rochford chiefly because he could never quite pin him down, or know that his own deceptions had been swallowed at

114. Horace Walpole, Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third, revised edition by G.F. Russell Barker (London, 1894), III, 168.

115. AECF Espagne 544, f.52, Béliardi to Choiseul, 9 September 1765 ; quoted in J.E. Martin-Allanic, Bougainville, navigateur, et les découvertes de son temps (Paris, 1964), I, 258, note 30.

face value. In short, unlike most of the diplomatic corps at Paris, Rochford was never one of Choiseul's "creatures."

But this brings us close to making a judgment upon Rochford's abilities and weaknesses as a diplomat, which properly belongs to the conclusion. He had at last achieved the elusive goal of a Ministerial post, without the aid of party connections, and he joined Grafton's Administration very much as an independent, as a King's Man, on the merits of his diplomatic experience and his known pliability. Whatever Choiseul's opinion regarding Rochford's appointment, there went up a general sigh of relief amongst the British diplomats in the field, to see one of their own number given charge of foreign policy. Perhaps the most heart-warming of the congratulations Rochford received was that of his former Chaplain, de Visme, now at St Petersburg, with which it seems appropriate to conclude ;

"As I cannot but admire the wisdom of His Majesty's choice, so I am under no uneasiness on the particular difficulties of the Task, after having, during so long a time, been witness to an application equal to very uncommon abilities. Though at so great a distance from home, yet I cannot but esteem myself extremely happy in being employed in this Department." 116

116. SP Russia 91/79, f.359, DeVisme to Rochford, 22 November 1768.

ASSESSMENT

Rochford once wrote that the assessment of personalities or "characters" was a very delicate business indeed. Fortunately it is no part of my task to form a character judgment on a person who has been dead for nearly two hundred years, but merely to assess the quality of his performance as a diplomat and his suitability to take charge of British foreign policy as a Secretary of State. Nevertheless, it may be observed in passing that Rochford was far from possessing an unattractive personality, insofar as can be judged from his letters. His warmth and affability, his quick sympathy, his sincerity, and his concern for the feelings of others, together with an almost total absence of sourness or vindictiveness, make them a joy to read. Yet these admirable qualities, while they might make a good friend, do not necessarily make a good diplomat. Just what sort of a diplomat was Rochford?

The overwhelming impression which arises from a detailed examination of Rochford's routine work is that of exceptional diligence and application to duty. This was, of course, exactly the impression which every diplomat sought to convey in his reports home, but in Rochford's case there are tangible results to support this view. His attitude to his work might almost be described as professional in an age where the British diplomatic service was manned largely by proudly self-confessed amateurs.

From the very start of his diplomatic apprenticeship at Turin, he did not shirk the drudgery involved in studying the

background to the cases entrusted to his attention, as in the case of the English Miners in Savoy, which involved quite complicated legal aspects. Where the defence of those who claimed Britain's protection was involved, he took the trouble to visit the people concerned, though at some distance from Turin, to obtain a first-hand understanding of their problems.

Thanks to the thoroughness with which he prepared himself in such cases, Rochford was rarely, if ever, caught out on a point of detail, and was more often able to use his command of the detail to good advantage. His interest in the routine part of his work also meant that he scarcely ever had to be prodded by instructions at every turn. Quite the contrary seems to be true ; Rochford's initiative was such that he often anticipated the next step to be suggested by the Secretary of State, either in an unsigned Note or more commonly in unofficial "soundings," usually with such accuracy and restraint as to earn praise and commendation, at times from the King himself. This surely suggests a nice sense of judgment and an ability to grasp the realities of a given situation, both vital qualities in a diplomat.

In over ten years' service abroad, Rochford only twice received serious rebukes for exceeding or failing to comply with his Instructions. The first rebuke, in the course of the negotiation at Turin relating to the Treaty of Aranjuez, was wholly undeserved, and proved in fact to be an oversight on the part of Holdernessee. Much more serious was the misunderstanding which bedevilled the

British side of the first Falkland Islands Crisis in 1766. Yet here again, the error stemmed largely from unclear instructions, for which Shelburne later apologized. Rochford's assumption regarding the Manila Ransom, based upon his Madrid experience in that negotiation, was probably more realistic than that entertained in London.

Rochford's success in minor negotiations and the routine cases which inevitably arise in the course of an embassy constitutes perhaps his most significant achievement as a diplomat. These were often matters in which his own initiative had suggested workable solutions, as in the case of the Villafranca duty, or the rulings he obtained in Spain clarifying the position of Vice-Consuls and Agents. Indeed, it is in Rochford's dealings with nearby British Consuls while at Turin and Madrid that he is seen at his most diligent and resourceful best. This may not seem particularly novel, yet in the context of the eighteenth century, and in view of the social gulf which usually divided the Consular from the Diplomatic Service, it was exceptional, especially for one of the nobility. In Rochford's period, the only other British diplomat to my knowledge who had such close dealings with Consuls was Benjamin Keene, who was not hampered by considerations of rank.

Not all negotiations were capable of resolution by the man on the spot, depending on circumstances far beyond his control, and Rochford had his share of frustration and disappointment from this source in the Aranjuez negotiation, the Manila Ransom claim, and the intractable problem of Dunkirk. It is arguable, though also perhaps debatable, that his efforts gained more for Britain

than the bare minimum with which some diplomats might have been content. His failure in the crisis over the French acquisition of Corsica was through no lack of vigilance or firmness on his part, but rather the refusal of a weak and divided Ministry to support the stern line which he personally advocated and pressed as far as he dared at Paris. Whether or not the policy of a stiffer British protest would have worked in practice is of course quite another question.

Rochford was generally well-received at the Courts to which he was appointed, and took care to preserve good relations with Ministers and Courtiers alike. This is very clearly seen at Turin, during the power-struggle between Ossorio and Bogino. With the monarchs themselves, Rochford was never at any time persona non grata, and there was no hint of a scandal to compare with that of Macartney at St Petersburg. Rochford seems to have been respected rather than disliked for his outspoken defence of British interests, and both Charles Emmanuel III of Savoy-Sardinia and Charles III of Spain are known to have complimented him on his tact and discretion.

In his dealings with fellow foreign ministers in the three capitals at which he resided, Rochford seems to have made a good impression, though this is one aspect where my evidence is admittedly deficient ; with more time to comb various European archives, this optimistic view might be modified considerably. He seems at least to have been recognized at Madrid as the leader of what might be termed the members of the "Common Cause," and demonstrated his leadership decisively in his actions at the

Royal espousal early in 1764. Other ministers came to him for advice, and were prepared to follow his lead in ceremonial matters ; the Portuguese Ambassador even had Rochford draft a difficult Note for him. Such small episodes suggest that Rochford's abilities were recognized by his colleagues.

Yet Rochford failed to make a good impression on the most powerful and well-known statesman he had to deal with, namely Choiseul, whose animadversions were noted in the previous chapter. It is impossible to speak with any certainty here, from the lack of supporting evidence, but I would suggest that Choiseul's dislike of Rochford stemmed equally from Rochford's strengths and weaknesses as a diplomat. Choiseul was accustomed to the adulation of the diplomatic corps at Paris, but Rochford refused to be counted one of his "creatures," and gave Choiseul a difficult time in some of their debates. But the failure of Choiseul's scheme to combine the Manila Ransom and Falkland Islands issues at the end of 1766 was profoundly humiliating, and it seems likely that he blamed Rochford for the confusions and misunderstandings on the British side. In addition, Choiseul complained that Rochford's word could not be relied upon, and this brings me to consider what must be counted as Rochford's most serious weakness as a negotiator ; his loquacity.

There are many more testimonies available from Rochford's Secretaryship than from his diplomatic career regarding his celebrated verbal vivacity, yet curiously such a trait is perhaps less reprehensible in a diplomat than in a Secretary of State. A skilled talker can often wear down and confuse his opponents

more effectively than the taciturn negotiator who must weigh carefully his every utterance. There are numerous instances of Rochford's having canvassed an issue unofficially, merely as a private person, without committing himself in any way. Was this in fact his favourite technique of debate ? To weave such a net that his interlocutor might begin to doubt his own argument ? To disclaim having stated a view ministerially, and convert the charge into an opportunity for yet more involved debate ?

Such an approach can sometimes be most effective, and also extremely frustrating for one's opponent, but it has the disadvantage that one tends not to be taken seriously at times when the initiative is reversed. In a Secretary of State, this is surely a serious fault.

Nevertheless, whatever Rochford's skills or weaknesses in negotiation, these form only part of the total estimation, and he can claim solid merits in other areas. Perhaps the primary function of a diplomat in the eighteenth century was the steady collection, assembling, and reportage of information which would be of use in framing foreign policy at home. Rochford's diligence and judgment here have had ample testimony. He spared no expense in the securing of reliable sources of secret intelligence, yet treated all the information thus gained with suitable caution and critical reserve. His reports were consistently measured and restrained, and at no time was their tone alarmist. He is known to have investigated rumours before reporting them, and there are several instances where he chose not to report a rumour which he was satisfied had no foundation.

Where it has possible to test the accuracy of Rochford's reports, as in the case of the state of the Spanish armed forces, they have come out favourably. Rochford's estimates were much closer to those accepted by Choiseul than the hopeful exaggerations of the French Ambassador, Ossun. Yet this might easily be explained from a similarity of intelligence sources, were it not for Rochford's sending his own Secretary to Cartagena to see for himself, and his close dealings through Porten with British Consuls in the Spanish ports.

Probably of equal value, yet much more difficult to obtain, were the details Rochford was able to supply of French and Spanish trade and finances. His attention to matters commercial may also suggest the origin of his most profound insight into European affairs, which was to inform his direction of British foreign policy as Southern Secretary after 1770.

The work of Professor Michael Roberts has established that as Southern Secretary Rochford was one of the very few statesmen on either side of the Channel who were beginning to think in terms other than the traditional Anglo-French enmity which had characterized the earlier part of the eighteenth century. This is much too large a question to be explored here, but I would suggest that Rochford's awareness of the relative decline in European importance of both England and France in consequence of the emergence of Russia and Prussia as great powers, may have had some initial glimmerings before his term as Northern Secretary, which seems the most obvious opportunity for this realization to dawn. Rochford's advocacy of a new Commercial Treaty with France

in 1767, when the obvious remedy to the prevailing difficulties (and that which was in fact adopted) was simply to induce France to recognize the provisions of Utrecht, strongly suggests that he was beginning to think in terms of a rapprochement such as that mooted by George III a few years later in 1772. (On this, see Roberts' Splendid Isolation, 1763-1780, p.38). This is, of course, merely speculation, but the fact of Rochford's secret talks with Martange in 1773 testifies to the breadth of vision he displayed as Secretary of State, as also to the risks he was willing to take in its furtherance.

How suitable, then, was Rochford by 1768 as a candidate for the Secretaryship to which he was appointed in October of that year? Newcastle, as noted in the previous chapter, declared him "the fittest for it of any man in England." In terms of his abilities and experience as a diplomat, I would be inclined to agree. Talent lay thin on the ground in these years, and while not by any means a perfect choice, Rochford does seem to have been the best available. Certainly, none could better his experience as a diplomat in the premier Courts of western Europe; the leading British diplomats of later years were at this time much younger men just starting out, such as Stormont, Robert Murray Keith, and James Harris (later Lord Malmesbury). The range yet unity of Rochford's diplomatic experience was quite exceptional in the service at this time.

Rochford cannot be described as an ideal choice, not only from the weaknesses mentioned above, but also because of his lack of political connexions at home, which made him a lightweight in

domestic politics and severely limited his effectiveness as a Government spokesman in Parliament. This also led him to foster a direct relationship with George III, which earned him the suspicion of his Cabinet colleagues and the reputation of being a "King's Man." Further, Rochford's slender personal fortune made him more dependent than most upon the profits of office, and he has been charged with the manipulation of the Falklands negotiation of 1770 in order to reap a fortune on the stock-market (in fact, however, his agent misjudged and lost heavily).

Such considerations as these tend to redress the very favourable balance established by his diplomatic career. They cannot, of course, erase the strong impression (even Horace Walpole concedes this) that Rochford would be an excellent administrator once in office, which indeed he proved to be. But there is one last consideration which may seem curiously trivial yet is not without significance ; Rochford did not enjoy good health. In this sense, he was far from being the "fittest man" in England for the rigours of high office. In the 1770s, his illnesses combined with Suffolk's gout to deprive Britain of any energetic direction in foreign affairs for weeks on end, much to the disgust of foreign Ambassadors in London. Rochford's resignation in 1775 owed as much to his poor state of health as to the impending war in America and the humiliations of the Sayre affair.

It is indeed tempting to speculate what use Rochford might have made of his wide diplomatic experience and his broadening vision of Britain's rôle with France and Spain in a

changing Europe, had he enjoyed better health, had he been spared the distractions of his domestic responsibilities as Southern Secretary, and had the American War not intervened.

But that belongs to his Secretaryship, which is quite another story.

FINIS

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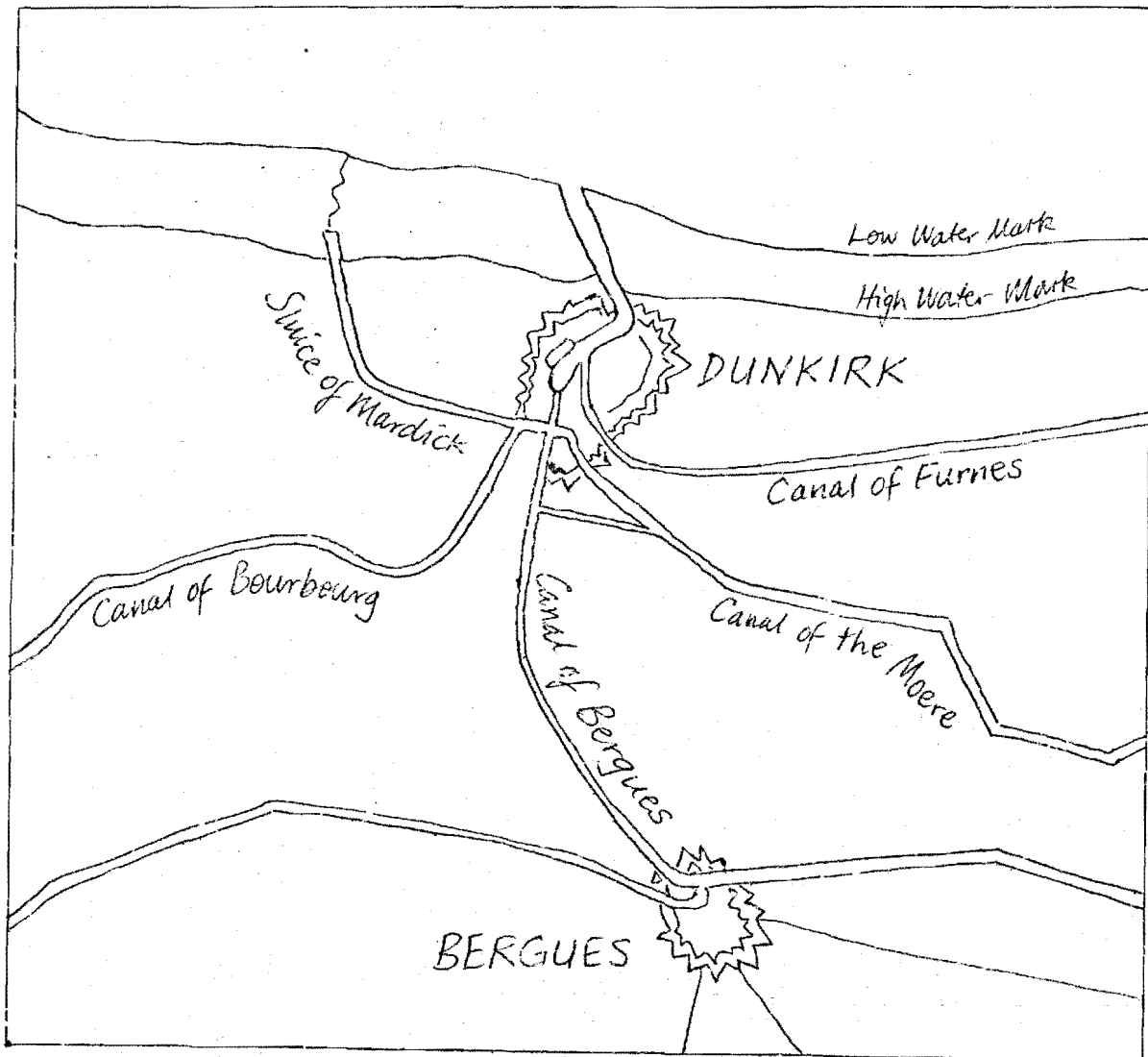
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APPENDIX A

(unfolds outwards)

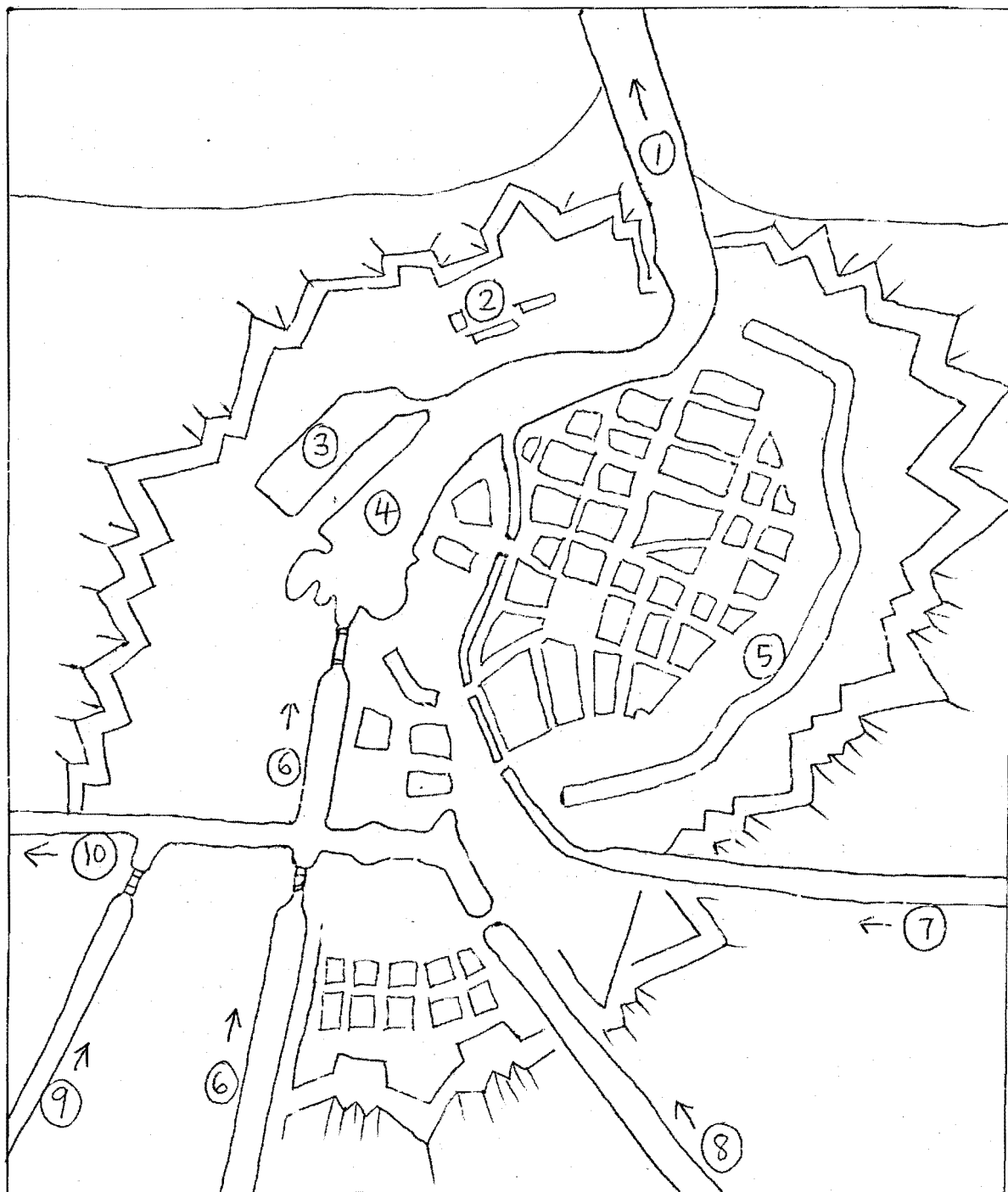


APPENDIX B : Sketch-Map showing the main areas of British Logwood-cutting activities in Yucatan and Honduras before 1786.



APPENDIX C : Sketch-Map showing the Environs
of Dunkirk in the 18th Century.

(Based on a larger map of 25 October 1768 from SP 78/268,
now Public Record Office, M.P.F. 330.)



APPENDIX D : Sketch-Plan of Dunkirk showing the system of Canals after 1763.

(Taken from Andrew Frazer's plan of 1774, SP 78/291, now in Public Record Office, M.P.F. 344.)

KEY :	1	Channel to sea	6	Canal of Bergues
	2	Old Citadel	7	Canal of Furnes
	3	King's Bason	8	Canal of the Moere
	4	Harbour	9	Canal of Bourbourg
	5	tract of the Cunette	10	Sluice of Nardick